

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society).
8^B, Dryden Chambers, 119 Oxford Street, London W.1.

VOL. XLV. No. 4

15th APRIL, 1959

Price Sixpence.

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

Ethel Smyth

By Vera Douie

This is a fascinating biography* of one of the most fascinating characters of her age. Battling through life, loving and hating, with enormous zest, so much does she come alive in Miss Christopher St. John's pages that those who did not know her will feel as they read that they did, and those who did will be grateful for the reconstruction. The achievement is all the more remarkable since the book must inevitably come into competition with Dame Ethel Smyth's own brilliant autobiographical works. Wisely, these have been freely quoted from, as has also her correspondence.

Ethel Smyth was the daughter of a Major-General and a gifted but frustrated mother who found no scope for her talents. Her future was determined by hearing for the first time at the age of twelve a Beethoven sonata played by her governess. This decided her to be a musician, and she allowed nothing to deflect her from her chosen course. Strong parental opposition was met by the simple expedient of making life so intolerable for those at home that ultimately her family were driven to consent to her going to Leipzig. Here she remained for a number of years, making many friends in the musical world. Here, too, she began her life-long fight for recognition, both abroad and in her native country. She sincerely believed that it was her sex which was responsible for her failure to achieve the position she deserved as a composer. This is not the place to discuss her merits as a musician, but, to judge from press-notices and private letters from those best qualified to judge, her work was often highly praised by the discerning.

When she was a child, Juliana Horatia Ewing and her husband were much impressed by her musical and literary gifts. It has since been questioned whether she was a better writer or composer, and the suggestion has been made that she dissipated her talents, especially as she brought to games, above all to golf, an equal absorption. But with her ardent nature and abounding vitality she had energy enough and to spare for all her activities.

Her friendships, too, and her love affair with Henry Brewster, demanded so much of her that it was a marvel she had anything to spare for other

*Ethel Smyth. By Christopher St. John (Longmans, 30s.)

activities. Some of her friends, not unnaturally, found her society overwhelming. "People like you," remarked one of them, "ought to take about with them a baize parrot-cover, for use when in contact with weaklings like me." Her friends included all the great men and women of her day, from royalty downwards.

As to her passionate friendships with women, she defended them to Brewster, saying: "What surprises me is that everyone is not in the same boat. Just think what a marvellous thing a human being is—what dramas of intellect, passion, heredity, individuality, circumstances, chance, are being played on the stage of one soul!"

She first came into contact with the women's suffrage movement in 1880 through her friendship with Rhoda Garrett, cousin of Mrs. Fawcett, but at this stage remained indifferent to the cause. It was not until 1910 that she joined the W.S.P.U., but then, so important did she consider the struggle for the vote, she gave up everything else for two years to take part in it, serving at one time a two-months sentence of imprisonment.

The English suffrage movement very greatly impressed her friend the Austrian novelist, Hermann Bahr who wrote: "(It) is the most alive thing in England today . . . I thought the House of Commons on a lower debating level than any legislative body in Europe I had known, but I never heard one feeble speech from the militant suffragists. They all know what they want and go straight to the point . . . And with what passion, with what terrible sincerity! As for your Mrs. Pankhurst, she is in my opinion the most astounding personality that even England—a country that is for ever turning out new types of genius—has yet produced."

Ethel Smyth's long life was lived to the full. She never let her sword sleep in her hand. The tragedy of deafness, which clouded her declining years, did not defeat her, and she found a measure of peace at the end. "Take her for all in all," concludes Miss St. John, "she was unique; in her faults as well as in her great qualities and gifts. Of how few people could it be said with as much truth as of Ethel Smyth, that 'we shall not look upon her like again'."

QUE FAUT-IL PENSER DE L'ECHEC SUISSE?

Il n'est pas trop tard pour revenir sur le vote des électeurs suisses relatif au suffrage féminin les 31 janvier et 1er février derniers; il est même bon de le faire avec quelque recul, car après avoir noté les réactions qu'il a suscitées il est plus aisé d'en voir la portée réelle et surtout de le situer dans un contexte international.

La Suisse est le seul pays civilisé, et au reste un des rares pays du monde, à n'avoir pas encore instauré le suffrage féminin. Les féministes n'ont pas été moins courageuses ni moins tenaces qu'ailleurs, mais malgré quelques rares succès locaux n'ont pas encore pu obtenir de victoire sur le plan national. Ce retard est attribué aux causes les plus diverses: absence des grandes crises qui ailleurs ont souvent déclenché le progrès, situation particulière qui oblige la Suisse, politiquement neutre, à se méfier de tout entraînement venu de l'étranger, désintéressement politique d'une grande partie des femmes elles-mêmes... La principale raison est peut-être celle que me suggérerait un Canadien, très loyalement féministe lui-même: dans tous les pays où le suffrage féminin est entré en vigueur, ce fut à la suite d'une décision parlementaire ou gouvernementale. L'influence féminine a pu jouer et surtout a pu contrôler ses effets car les hommes responsables de la décision ont dû se prononcer ouvertement. En Suisse, au contraire, toute modification constitutionnelle doit être soumise au vote de tous les citoyens et *le scrutin est secret*. Mon interlocuteur canadien doutait que dans un seul pays un vote secret des électeurs eût abouti à rendre les femmes électrices...

Toujours est-il que la majorité négative de deux contre un, avec une fréquentation inusitée du scrutin, a de quoi rendre songeur. Pourquoi donc avoir eu l'imprudence de lancer cette question sans s'être assuré de meilleurs appuis sur les terrains cantonaux? On pense que l'initiateur, le regretté conseiller national Feldman (réemment décédé à cause du surmenage dû à ses fonctions) voulait une fois pour toutes placer les électeurs suisses en face de leurs responsabilités.

Il faudra certes du temps pour remonter la pente. Mais déjà les féministes suisses, "désappointées mais non découragées", comme le disait leur présidente Mme. Choisy, examinent dans quelle direction il faudra continuer les efforts. Il y a d'ailleurs de beaux résultats partiels, plus beaux qu'on ne les aurait même espérés. Tout d'abord, la belle victoire du canton de Vaud, le premier à accorder aux femmes le vote en matière Cantonale—résultat intéressant si l'on se rappelle que les cantons suisses sont des états souverains. Ensuite le fait que les cantons romands—non seulement Vaud mais Neuchâtel et Genève, ce dernier réalisant un progrès surprenant—ainsi

que la ville de Fribourg, sans doute influencée par son université catholique, ont été nettement favorables au projet de loi.

Il semble que la lutte devra porter dorénavant non plus sur le plan politique, les partis ayant été beaucoup plus favorables dans leurs proclamations que les électeurs devant l'urne, mais beaucoup plus sur le plan sociologique. Il faudra intéresser les *femmes* davantage aux problèmes politiques car elles ont tendance à se satisfaire de leurs réalisations sur le plan social et religieux: il faudra leur montrer l'importance d'une bonne politique pour toutes les questions d'utilité publique et d'amélioration sociale qui les préoccupent. Il faudra étudier les milieux *masculins*, car leur attitude à l'égard des femmes dépend largement de leur niveau culturel et de leurs intérêts, les paysans, surtout dans les cantons primitifs, tenant irréductiblement aux vieilles idées, les intellectuels étant en général progressistes et les "moyens" opposants. Deux surprises à examiner en détail: la grande citadelle socialiste de Zurich fortement opposée, alors qu'en général les milieux ouvriers souhaitent le concours politique des femmes, et la forte majorité positive de Genève malgré l'afflux considérable d'immigrants alémaniques.

La dure défaite a donc montré l'extrême complexité du problème, étonnant même des politiciens chevronnés. Elle n'est ni définitive ni attristante et comporte certains succès encourageants.

Et puis, si ç'avait été aux femmes, supposées électrices, à se prononcer sur le suffrage masculin, qu'auraient-elles décidé?

I. Archinard

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen," 15th April, 1934
Leonora de Alberti is dead, and with her something of radiance has passed out of life.

It is impossible to put into words all that the loss of our dear comrade means to St. Joan's Alliance, and the gratitude that we feel for her life of service. For twenty-three years her courage and her zeal have been an inspiration to us, her wisdom and her knowledge have been always at hand, and now we remain in a world which she has left to carry on without her. God's ways are His own, and we know that He will not let His work suffer, and that strength and courage will be given us.

Miss Jeffery, founder of our Society, wrote after Miss de Alberti's death: "In all these years I have never seen a single trait that was not lovable and could not be admired—such a sound and trustworthy intellect and yet withal so childlike and pious and simple." Few people combine to such marked degree qualities of soul and mind. Leonora de Alberti was beloved both in private and in public life, and in both she was tireless in her service to others.—In Memoriam: Leonora de Alberti.

Notes and Comments

We send warm congratulations to the National Union of Women Teachers on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee. We have worked together in close collaboration and friendship for many years and are glad to pay tribute to the enthusiasm and single-minded fidelity of the N.U.W.T. to the principles we hold in common. Our best wishes go with the N.U.W.T. to the end of the road.

* * *

The Street Offences Bill has now passed through Committee stage. Despite the efforts of our friends, the amendments to delete the term "common prostitute" and to include the necessity of proving annoyance before a conviction, were lost. The Government appears determined to get the Bill through with these clauses intact. As the Government whips were on (the Opposition were allowed a free vote) and discussion stifled by the closure, the amendments were doomed to failure.

Members on the Government side did not refrain from abuse and vilification of Members of the Opposition and the whole proceedings turn democratic government into a farce.

On the final stage of the Committee, the Government accepted an amendment to increase the maximum penalty for those convicted of living on immoral earnings from five to seven years.

The only hope now lies in the House of Lords, whose Members have on two occasions recently, shown their independence of the Party system and may, we hope, vote for justice and the liberty of the subject when the Bill comes before them.

* * *

Mrs. Cook, writing in *The International Woman Co-operator* congratulates Mrs. Eva Dodds on her election to the Board of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. She draws attention however to the fact that Mrs. Dodd is the *only* woman on the Board and that since the retirement of her predecessor in 1936, there has been *no* woman among the twenty-eight Directors.

She deplores the low status of women throughout the Movement and challenges the attitude revealed in the statements of a "Boardman" that, "so far as general *unskilled* shop work is concerned our Board feels we shall maintain a high proportion of *women* in our service and while this may solve the general problem of counter service *the outlook for staffing of higher status will not improve until we have altered our outlook in the matter of BOY recruitment.*"

She makes a plea, not only for more women to be given major appointments, but for girls to be given the same opportunities as boys to fit themselves fully to serve co-operation in the field of trading and administration.

The next Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance will be held in Geneva, on June 27th and 28th, immediately following the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations on the Eradication of Prejudice and Discrimination.

As this Council Meeting will be only nine months after the preceding one in Brussels, it is suggested that no Council Meeting be held in 1960 and that the seventeenth Council Meeting be held in London in 1961, when the United Kingdom Section will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee.

Members of the Alliance who wish to attend the Council Meeting should notify the Hon. Secretary at 8b Dryden Chambers, 119 Oxford Street, W.1., without delay.

* * *

United Nations.

United Nations. At the thirteenth Session of the *Status of Women Commission*, held in New York in March, St. Joan's International Alliance was represented by Miss Frances McGillicuddy and Dr. de Spur. Soeur Marie André du Sacré Coeur also made an intervention concerning the status of African women on behalf of St. Joan's International Alliance and the W.U.C.W.U.; the first time that a nun has addressed the United Nations.

A report of the work of the Commission will appear in the next issue of *The Catholic Citizen*.

At the *Social Commission* the Alliance is being represented by Mrs. Wanda Grabinska.

At the Fifteenth Session of the *Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East* held in Broadbeach, Queensland, in March, Mrs. Fogarty, Vice-President of the Queensland Section of the Alliance attended as Observer.

Mademoiselle Archinard represented the Alliance at the *Conference on the Elimination of Statelessness* held in Geneva in March.

* * *

On Friday, May 8th, at 7.30 p.m., under the auspices of the Catholic International Chaplaincy, the Alliance will give a party for Catholic women overseas students, at the Chaplaincy, 41 Holland Park, W.11 (two minutes from Holland Park Station).

There will be short speeches on the work of the Alliance, followed by discussion. Members of the Alliance are invited to attend.

* * *

A meeting of the Merseyside branch of the Alliance will be held at Atlantic House on Tuesday, April 28th, at 6.30 p.m. when Miss P. C. Challoner, vice-president of St. Joan's International Alliance, will speak on the work of St. Joan's Alliance. All are welcome.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

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

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The Forty-Eighth Annual Meeting

The 48th Annual General Meeting of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance was held on Saturday, March 21st at 27 Wilfred Street, Westminster, Mrs. Shattock, M.D., D.P.M., presiding.

After the minutes of the last Annual Meeting were read and signed, the Annual Report for the year 1958 was read by Miss Guessard, followed by the Merseyside Branch Report, read by Miss Barry and the hon. treasurer's Report, presented by Miss Carr. The report on *The Catholic Citizen* was presented by Miss Spender, editor of the journal, and she reminded us of the constantly rising costs of printing and urged us to try to get more people to read *The Catholic Citizen*.

Mrs. Halpern, a former member of the Committee, who contributes many excellent articles on the Month in Parliament to *The Catholic Citizen*, moved the adoption of the Report. She prefaced her remarks by saying that she thought the Alliance ought to be called St. Joan's Political and Social Alliance, rather than the other way round, since the emphasis and pressure are on the political side and the rest follows. She paid a tribute to the invaluable nature of the international work done by St. Joan's. Some people may wonder, she said, why such a Society as the Alliance exists since there is no doubt that Parliament now sees equality between men and women as a fact. But, Mrs. Halpern pointed out that much has still to be done to implement that acceptance of fact and St. Joan's needs to go on fighting politically and attacking the press so as to achieve its aims. We are, she said, part of a fighting democracy, and, since the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, we must go on, not truculently or sitting in grooves, but battling hard, and we must not lose heart if our resolutions have to be brought forward again and again.

Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, whom members were very pleased to see in their midst, restored to health once more, seconded the adoption of the

Report. Miss Parnell paid a very eloquent tribute to the small office staff who do such truly noble work and at such little cost, since all work is done voluntarily. Miss Parnell felt that we should all do our utmost to recruit new members for the Alliance and suggested that we could perhaps appeal to the ordinary individual by pointing out that St. Joan's works for humanity, morality and justice. *The Catholic Citizen*, she said, is admirable ammunition, and maybe the interest of outsiders could be stirred by giving them a chance to read this excellent paper.

We are always delighted to have Overseas members with us and were very pleased to welcome Miss Elizabeth Cape from New South Wales, who expressed her gratitude to the Alliance for the warm welcome she and Miss McGovern from Western Australia (also present at the meeting) had received. She felt it an honour to be asked to speak on behalf of her fellow members in Australia. She wondered if it might be possible to advertise ourselves more widely. Miss Cape extended an invitation to the Committee to go to Sydney in 1961, the Jubilee Year of St. Joan's! The adoption of the Report was put to the meeting and carried unanimously. Dr. Shattock, Chairman of St. Joan's, then addressed the meeting and said how pleasant it was to hear the Report read as it gave her a feeling of something achieved. It showed how unremitting hard work succeeded in gnawing at opposition. Referring to the introduction of Women Peers to the House of Lords, Dr. Shattock said that the Lords themselves seemed to feel that they had been a long time in following the lead of the Commons in this matter. She expressed great pleasure at the Holy Father's reply to St. Joan's letter of homage sent with a copy of *The Catholic Citizen* on the occasion of his accession to the Papacy. She reminded us of the interest the Holy Father showed in the work of women's organisations when, as Cardinal Roncalli, Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE FORTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING 21st MARCH, 1959

1. House of Lords

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance welcomes the passing of the Life Peerages Bill, which enables women to take their seat in the House of Lords. The Alliance deplors the continued exclusion of the hereditary women peers.

2. Street Offences Bill

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance calls upon the Government so to amend the Street Offences Bill as to eliminate the term "common prostitute" and to make it an offence for "any person" to loiter for the purposes of prostitution to the annoyance of any inhabitant, occupier of non-residential premises, or passenger. The Alliance further demands that the burden of proof of this offence should not rest solely on the evidence of the police.

3. Factories Bill

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance calls upon the Government to amend the Factories Bill so as to provide that relaxations of regulations, more particularly regarding hours of employment and night work shall apply equally to men and women. Further that women be no longer included in the same category as young persons.

4. Domicile

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance welcomes the passing of the Third Reading of the Domicile Bill, in the House of Lords, which provides that the rules regarding domicile shall apply to all married women as they apply to any other person of full age or capacity. The Alliance calls upon the Government to give facilities for the speedy passage of the bill into law.

5. Equal Guardianship of Infants

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance calls upon the Government to introduce and pass into law a Bill, giving both parents equal rights of guardianship over their legitimate children.

6. Equal Pay

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance calls upon the Government to establish equal pay throughout the Government Services without delay. It deplors the postponement of Equal Pay until 1961 and the exclusion of women in the Industrial Grades from even this scheme.

7. Age of Retirement

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance urges that the age of retirement and right to pension be the same for men and women workers.

8. Taxation

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance calls for the separate taxation of married persons and the removal of all sex discrimination in taxation.

9. Education

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance reiterates its demand for full financial equality for Catholic schools in the national scheme for education. It further urges that in all schemes of education equal opportunity be made available for boys and girls, both in this country and in all territories under British administration.

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

Thank you for your generous response to the Rent Appeal, those who sent and those who gave at the Annual General Meeting. The fund is still open—we have just had to spend over £100—so if by any chance you have not sent the Alliance anything yet, will you be kind enough to do something. We need the support of all our members.

The total amount raised so far is £114. Will you help to make it £200.

M. Guessard

Noreen K. Carr

in 1935, he received and entertained representatives of several organisations, including delegates from St. Joan's Alliance. Dr. Shattock spoke of the Street Offences Bill and pointed out that it is only by writing to and interviewing M.P.s that we can make them see our point of view. She deprecated the giving of almost unlimited power to the police who should, surely, remain the guardians of morality but not the judges of it.

Miss Margaret Clarke undertook the difficult task of appealing for funds in place of Miss Carr, who, as Miss Clarke said, had done it so admirably for the past eight years. Miss Clarke said that we all have reason to be very grateful for the wonderful voluntary work so ably undertaken by the people in the office, but some expenses there must inevitably be. She considered an office in Central London to be essential and, so far, no-one had been able to find a cheaper office. Postage and printing are two very heavy items nowadays. Miss Clarke said that the most precious commodity today is time—she was not asking for that, but she was asking for money—as much as everyone could afford to give. The result of the appeal for rent was £68—which, added to the amount already received came to a total of £110.

Dr. Heath said that she found that making a present of a year's subscription to *The Catholic Citizen* was an ideal way of attracting new members and she asked members present to adopt this method which invariably works.

Before introducing the resolutions Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, President of St. Joan's International, told the members that Soeur Marie André of the White Sisters had spoken in the name of the Alliance and of the W.U.C.W.O. at the Status of Women Commission in New York on the position of the African Woman.

Speaking on the second resolution (Street Offences Bill) Dame Vera pointed out that we desire the words "common prostitute" removed from the Bill and "annoyance" inserted. With regard to the Question of Domicile (resolution No. 4) Dame Vera said that Lord Denning had made a fine speech in which he clearly accepted the idea that a married woman should have a domicile of her own, but there was a confusing legal and financial tangle which would have to be sorted out, and she urged members to write to their M.P.s on this question. Dame Vera asked that the resolution on the same age of retirement and pensions for men and women be inserted again. The resolutions were subsequently put to the meeting by the Chairman and passed.

The members of the executive committee were re-elected *en bloc* as no new nominations had been received. All members relaxed over Miss Carr's usual delicious tea.

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

During March Parliament was, for the most part, dealing with Supply under its various headings. The House Purchasing and Housing Bill, on which Miss Burton has been so active, came up for recommitment on March 4th and had its report stage and third reading on March 11th. On this occasion Miss Burton went into the attack again. She raised two points: whether "male guarantors will not be demanded where women applicants for loans meet the credit-worthiness terms of the Building Societies Association", and, "what will happen to a society which signs the agreement the Minister has mentioned and does not keep it?" She was supported in due course by Dame Irene Ward and Miss Herbison. Mr. Brooke in reply to the second point said: "If . . . a society were to break the agreement, whether by discriminating against women or in any other way, the Minister would give notice to terminate the agreement for the future." In reply to the first point he said: "In no case can there be any question of some discriminating provision, whether the seeking of a male guarantor or anything else, simply because the applicant is a woman." It would appear that the Government is entirely behind Miss Burton in her efforts and the knowledge that this is so, combined with the very full publicity achieved should bring this lamentable practice to a stop. Miss Burton is to be congratulated on her battle.

The question of Pensions was much to the fore. On March 23rd Mr. Boyd Carpenter announced a new allowance of 10s. a week for all war widows of 70 and over, to start from the first pay day in June. In answer to a question by Mr. Gurden it appeared that about 58,000 widows will be affected. The other and more difficult question was that of widowed mothers and the earnings rule. This was discussed at length on March 18th when Miss Edith Pitt (Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance) moved various relaxations of the Earnings Regulations which would allow widowed mothers to earn up to 60s. a week before deductions start, instead of 50s. as heretofore. There was a good deal of feeling on the part of members that the whole scheme of making deductions from pensions for earnings by this class of pensioner was wrong, and it was suggested, since it was not possible to remove the rule altogether without new legislation, that it might be possible to put the figure of permitted earnings up to some nominal figure such as £20 a week. Mrs. Eirene White, for instance, pointed out that the average pensioned widow's earnings of something under £8 a week was very low compared with the average national earnings of men which were now rather more than £13 a week. "Even," she went on, "if one deducts the cost of supporting the man himself, there is still a gap between what the

family of the widowed mother has to live on and the average earnings for families where men are the main support." Mrs. Jeger said: "We all want her work to be arranged so that she can be home when the children return from school and she should not have to work long hours and arrive home too exhausted to care for them. The earnings rule has the effect of making a woman who wants to have sufficient income to maintain her children's standard of living work longer hours in order to overtake the loss of £2 10s. of which the Government deprive her."

The Minister explained that the cost of removing the earnings restrictions would amount to about £100 million a year. He regarded the suggestion to increase the earnings limit to "an astronomical figure" as "a plain abuse of the power conferred on the Minister by Act of Parliament, because . . . it is a power of adjustment to meet the movement of figures." The financial time for a considerable change has not yet come, but meanwhile the Motion was agreed and will, as the Minister said, "give relief in directions where we all want to give relief . . . without endangering the major . . . financial issues involved."

On March 10th Mrs. Emmet asked the Colonial Secretary about the answers received from the various Governors to a letter he sent drawing attention to the United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women. The answer is too long to give in full but is extremely interesting and informative. Overseas Territories are divided into five categories; 15 territories could accept the Convention, 12 territories could accept Articles I and II but not III, 3 territories could not accept Article I (or I and II), 6 territories could not accept any Article while 6 territories are insufficiently developed for the Convention to apply to them.

In the Supply debate on National Health on March 12th there was quite a series of women speakers—Miss Herbison, Mrs. McAlister and Mrs. Mann. The latter suggested that the Home Helps service should recruit men as domestic helps to look after "crotchety old bachelors" who don't want "a woman mucking around my apartment."

One of those engaging parliamentary storms blew up on March 12th, which add a tinge of "unparliamentary" colour to the columns of Hansard. On this occasion, unusually enough, both combatants were women, Dr. Edith Summerskill and Dame Irene Ward. The question at issue was whether it would have been more proper for Dr. Summerskill to warn a certain member that she was about to refer to him personally or whether she was justified in assuming he would be there anyway. The ladies varied very much in

their technique. Dr. Summerskill remained strictly "parliamentary" in the official third person style: — "It shows the paucity of the hon. Lady's argument that she has to descend to vulgar abuse," and, "I am surprised that the hon. Lady should be so feline on this occasion." Dame Irene, however made no attempt to remain aloof and said: "Do not be an ass, Edith," and, "Have a sense of humour, woman."

Mr. Maurice Edelman appealed to the Chair: "Is it in order, Sir Charles, for the hon. Lady . . . to describe my right hon. Friend . . . as an ass?" But the Chair no doubt wisely did not utter.

B. M. Halpern

JURY WOMEN IN IRELAND

In recent years it has been suggested from time to time that the jury system as it operates in the Republic of Ireland, should be revised. At present, there are so many exempt professions and classes that people feel it does not represent in any sense "Trial by Peers".

How do women fit into the picture? Not at all. In 1922 when the Irish Free State (later to become the Republic of Ireland) came into being, women were, for the first time, liable for jury service on equal terms with men. In 1927 the then Minister for Justice, proposed a new Juries Act which amongst other things, made women exempt from Jury Service. This was proposed without any request for such exemption being made by the women whom it affected. There was much opposition from women's societies to this proposal, and the Minister then compromised by placing women in the "exempt but liable on application" category; in other words volunteers.

After the Act was passed, a number of women did apply and duly received jury summonses but as far as I know, no woman actually served on a jury from this time onwards, as there was such a prejudice against women that the volunteer was always "challenged"—i.e. objected to. The few women who did come forward but who were never allowed to be on a jury naturally became discouraged, and from the early 1930's women ceased to volunteer.

This was the position when in 1954 I decided to apply to be placed on the jury lists and by this means see if there was still the same prejudice against women jurors. To be eligible to apply one must be the owner of property of a certain valuation. Miss (now Councillor) Kathleen Swanton and I made separate application in writing in July 1954 and in April 1955 we were notified that our names were duly on the lists.

At this time there was a certain flurry of press trumpets about women jurors, and in a letter to an Irish newspaper at that time I said: "Acceptance on the jury list is only the first step, and the

next will be to actually serve on a jury. Hitherto, in the few cases where women have been called they have almost invariably been challenged so that they have rarely been on a jury, merely on the panel. That this is well-known is evidenced by the reply I received to my verbal application for the necessary form—'Women don't serve on juries'. . . ."

1955, 1956 and 1957 passed and I was not summoned, but each year I made formal application for inclusion. In April 1958 there was further correspondence in the Press on women jurors, and I pointed out that although three years on the list, I had not been called, and queried if in fact the Act meant what it said. Early in June, barely six weeks after this correspondence appeared I received a summons. I believe that those responsible for the jury lists realized that there was no power in the Act by which they could pass over indefinitely a name once validly on the lists.

The Court to which I was summoned was the High Court, that is, civil cases, and my name came out of the ballot box on the very first day on which I appeared. I entered the jury box, only to be challenged when it came to my turn to take the oath, at which I had to leave the box. On two subsequent days my name was again called, and I was again rejected, but to my amazement, and indeed to that of all the Court, on the fourth time on which my number came "out of the hat" neither of the solicitors representing the plaintiff and defendant rose to their feet to say the now familiar "Challenged", and I was actually on a jury.

Since the challenges are made without reason, I must infer they were entirely on the grounds of sex—a sort of white blackbird, or, let's face it, a crank. During the three weeks I was on call I was challenged six times and served on two juries. But in succeeding in actually getting on a jury I made history, as Court officials questioned by the Press, could not recall during the last thirty years any woman who had served on a jury.

From what I have observed, it is perfectly obvious that sex discrimination against women on juries is still with us and is likely to remain. It is also obvious that with only one or two women on the lists it is easy to exclude them by the legal right of challenge, while the authorities who call the panels can see that they are not included in criminal cases.

Our women's societies are constantly pressing for jury reform which would include them. Meantime I am encouraging such women as are eligible, to apply, and join with me in helping to break down the barrier, so that when reform comes, as it must, the Courts will have already become accustomed to women jurors and will no longer challenge merely on grounds of sex.

Beatrice Dixon

REVIEW

The God of Reason. By Régis Jolivet. (A Faith and Fact Book. Translated by Dom Mark Pontifex. Burns Oates, 7s. 6d.)

Monsignor Jolivet points out that science as such can prove nothing, in the strictest sense, either for or against God. The existence of God cannot be established under the form of an equation.

The book consists of an introduction, which the reviewer found very hard to read and understand; two parts and a conclusion. The first part consists of the various arguments for the existence of God and the second part contains what we can learn from our reasoning about the nature of God.

Part one is divided into the Moral Way and the Metaphysical Way and it is surprising how whenever one begins to become confused a few lines quoted from St. Thomas will clarify the matter. In part 2 the problem of evil is discussed very well starting with St. Augustine's problem—"If God exists, whence comes evil?" If God does not exist, whence comes good?" This section will be of particular interest to the many who have thought like St. Augustine.

The conclusion recapitulates the proof of God's existence and also discusses atheism. Monsignor Jolivet says that the atheist "calls for a power of conviction which shall dispense him from making any effort". One must, however, agree with Pascal who quotes the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as saying: "We only seek him that groans."

With the world in its present state one must also agree with Monsignor Jolivet's concluding remark when he says that God is the meaning and reason of everything while it is we and the world who are problems.

I. M. S.

On the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Mary Wollstonecraft, a wreath will be laid on her tombstone in Old St. Pancras Churchyard (Pancras Road, north of St. Pancras Station), by Alderman Mrs. Jeger, M.P., at 11 o'clock on Monday, 27th April, 1959.

A private view of a small exhibition of books and other material relating to Mary Wollstonecraft will be on view at the Fawcett Library, 27 Wilfred Street, Westminster, S.W.1, Monday, 27th April, 3 p.m.—8 p.m. The exhibition will remain open until the 1st May, each day (10 a.m.—5 p.m.).

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