

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society), 55, Berners Street, London, W. 1.

VOL. IX., No. 10. //

November 15th, 1923.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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

—Francis Thompson.

OCCUPATION CENTRES FOR MENTALLY DEFECTIVE CHILDREN.

By ANNE A. ANDERSON.

In 1899 the Educational (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act was passed giving to Education Authorities power to provide Special Schools (Day and Residential) schools for children who by reason of defect cannot benefit by the education given in the ordinary elementary schools.

In 1914 an amending Act made the provision of such schools compulsory,* but there are many children who are of so low a grade mentally as to be incapable of deriving any benefit even from the instruction given in special schools, and these children had to be "excluded."

The plight of these children is a sad one. They are debarred from most of the little pleasures attendant on the normal child's school life, such as parties, treats, outings, etc., and they just hang about, getting into everyone's way at home, or worse still, a prey to every evil which the streets present, to those unable to resist temptations put in their way. Added to this their limited mental capacity is left absolutely dormant, for it is well nigh impossible to give a defective child the right sort of training and occupation in

the normal, and to the defective, the complex surroundings of the ordinary home. It is for these children that Occupation Centres have been started.

As far back as 1914, when the Mental Deficiency Act came into operation, the Central Association for the Care of the Mentally Defective (now the Central Association for Mental Welfare) urged the need for some provision for these children. The war, and the economy restrictions imposed as a result, blocked the way to any progress being made, and it was not until 1912 that the first little Centre was started in Ipswich, by the Ipswich Voluntary Association for the Care of the Mentally Defective.

Since then Centres have been opened in many areas and so far they have proved themselves an unqualified success.

It must be clearly emphasised that an Occupation Centre is not intended to be either an adjunct to, nor a substitute for a Special School. The type of child for which they are intended is the child who will never earn its living in normal surroundings. A good many of these children will eventually go into institutions and, whatever their prospects for the future are, the training at a Centre is given with this future in view. They are taught habits of self-control, cleanliness, etc., which make them more possible from the point of view of the community. Anti-

*In spite of this Amending Act there are still a large number of Education Authorities who have failed to carry out the duties laid upon them, and it is estimated that there are at least 13,800 feeble-minded educable children unprovided for. It is, however, with the uneducable, defective child, that this article is concerned.

social tendencies are broken down and the child is happier when it gets to an institution because he has already mixed in a normal way with other children of more or less the same type. There are also children attending the Centres who have good homes, and whose parents are able to make provision for the future, and these children are so trained as to be able to do small things at home, setting tables, dusting, simple handwork, etc. They play at games and learn valuable lessons in co-operation through such games, though in the beginning there is always a difficulty in getting them to join in play. This arises from the fact that they have always been left out of the play with normal children as being "soft," or no good at games, and they have an instinctive feeling that they will not fit in. At the Centre they play naturally without any fear of ridicule or defeat. Lastly, the Centre is an enormous help to the very often over-worked and nerve racked mother. She knows that at the Centre the child is understood and happy, that there is no fear of him being teased or tormented as he would be in the street, and one has only to be in charge of a Centre to realise how much they are appreciated by the parents. The curriculum at a Centre is varied and includes physical exercises, ball and musical games, exercises to promote co-ordination of movement, singing, and simple handwork. Industrial occupations are a great pleasure, and the children love to clean the spoons and chairs, wash up the cups and saucers, and polish their own boots.

The cost of starting and equipping a Centre need not be an extravagant one, and the more one can utilise home-made things the better. Cotton reels, dyed bright colours can be used for threading, colour matching, etc., empty match boxes for making furniture, shop catalogues for cutting out and painting, etc., etc. A doll's bed is used to teach bed-making, and a toy band composed of drums, trumpets, tambourines and triangle is a very great joy. Drill and team games form an important part of the work. They are an outlet for the restlessness of one type of defective child and they have the effect of waking up the torpid and lethargic, while the child with solitary tendencies learns by degrees to be more

sociable, as it becomes interested in the game.

It has not been found necessary to utilise the services of the highly trained teacher for the Centres but the work offers great scope to the woman of good education, who has a genuine love for children, and an infinite capacity for taking pains. She must be self-sacrificing, and hopeful that the work she is undertaking is worth while, however depressing or difficult it may appear at the outset. Defective children have (though many would deny it) a great deal of character, and they are extremely sensitive to atmosphere. Once let them realise that the main object is to make them happy, that they can express themselves in their own way, and will be listened to in a sympathetic and understanding manner, that they can always count on the love and support of the person in charge, it is perfectly wonderful how they develop.

Occupation Centres were started originally as a purely voluntary effort, but they have proved to be of such value that the Board of Control, together with the various Mental Deficiency Act Committees in whose areas Centres have been started, are now giving small grants towards their upkeep. These grants are inadequate and one is still dependent on voluntary effort to a certain extent, but one hopes that when their value is more fully realised they will be more generously supported.

Finally, I would say to all interested in this new branch of social work, visit an Occupation Centre, spend an hour or two with the children and watch them at their work and play. I do not think that there is any doubt but that such a visit would convince even a prejudiced person of the value of the work, and further, it will enable the visitor to understand the amount of danger and suffering which can be spared to these "Peter Pans" by giving them regular training and trying to improve their very limited mental power.

Addresses of Occupation Centres can be obtained from the Central Association for Mental Welfare, 24, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1., and visitors at any Centre are welcome.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, held at Caxton Hall, on October 20th, it was resolved that the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society should in future be known as St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance. This was in accordance with the decision made at a general meeting held on June 23rd, that the name of the Society should be changed owing to the difficulties of International co-operation, occasioned by the ruling of the Holy See that "no Society, calling itself CATHOLIC, may take part in or be officially represented at any meetings of a non-confessional, Protestant, or neutral nature."

The Revd. Dom Gilbert Higgins, speaking in favour of the name "St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance," urged all members to march forward, shoulder to shoulder, helping one another by sympathy, suggestions and assistance of every kind. He made a strong appeal in favour of the young, he hoped the Society would never reject a suggestion or new idea because it came from a very young member; the young were venturesome and often received new light. He hoped the Society would hold as many meetings as possible, and that every member of the Society would be proud of it and enthusiastic in its support. He wished the Society every success under whatever name it was known by.

We regret that the Government did not think fit to appoint a woman delegate to the International Labour Conference, though Miss Constance Smith and Miss Margaret Bondfield were appointed as advisers. This is an improvement on last year, when no woman went from Great Britain. Canada appointed Miss Carmichael, and Norway appointed Mme. Kjelsberg as delegates; these were the only women delegates. The other countries sending women advisers were Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden.

The Annual Conference of the National Council of Women held in Edinburgh last month was a great success. The programme dealt almost entirely with the welfare and protection of children. The resolution moved in the name of the C.W.S.S. (now St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance) by Mrs. Hamilton More Nisbett, calling on the Gov-

ernment to pass the Guardianship, Maintenance and Custody of Infants Bill, was carried unanimously without discussion.

Lord Provost Sir Thomas Hutchinson welcomed the delegates to the city and expressed on behalf of the Corporation and citizens, appreciation of what the N.C.W. had done during the past twenty-seven years in matters affecting the welfare of the nation.

The new President of the N.C.W. is Mrs. George Morgan.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will hold a series of political meetings at the International Women's Franchise Club, 9, Grafton Street, Bond Street. At the first meeting, on Tuesday, November 20th (5-30 p.m.), Councillor Mrs. V. M. Crawford will speak on the Guardianship, Maintenance and Custody of Infants Bill; and on Tuesday, December 4th (at 5-30 p.m.), Mrs. Beer, M.A., will speak on the Trade Boards Bill. After the meetings members will go to the House of Commons to lobby M.P.'s. and get their support for the Bills. (Tea will be served at 5 p.m., 9d.)

A speaker's class has been started at the office, 55, Berners Street, under Miss Grace Bumpstead. Any member who wishes to join should at once apply to Miss Barry.

In Memory of Alice Meynell.

To Heaven's portal did she stand so near
That she could catch the soul-uplifting
strains?
And were her human notes so full, so clear,
As echoing the spiritual refrains?
O now that softly into silence sink
Her cadences, her melody's pure stream,
The strong, supernal music forms a link,
As forms 'twixt heaven and earth the
sunset-beam.
Th' unfathomable depths, that bound this
shore,
Serve as a mirror to Heaven's loveliness:
As the shades deepen ever more and more,
As to one centre all the colours press,
So, deep to deep responding, still she grows
In knowledge, wisdom, infinite repose.

ALICE GILL.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

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

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

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WOMEN IN THE FACTORY.*

The Fifth International Labour Conference, which has just taken place, affords an opportunity for considering in these columns a book which, but for lack of space should have been reviewed some months ago. In her book "Women in the Factory," Dame Adelaide Anderson tells the story of the Woman Inspectorship of Factories and Workshops from its inception in 1893 until 1921. Among the questions discussed at the International Labour Conference was "The Determination of the General Principles of Inspection of Labour." It is not necessary to impress upon readers of the "Catholic Citizen" the vital importance of safeguarding the interests of women workers by the direct representation of those interests by women qualified to speak for industrial workers.

How much can be done to ameliorate the lot of the worker, may be seen in the story told by Dame Adelaide Anderson.

As Viscount Cave tells us in his Foreword: "It was a story worth the telling, for it is a chronicle of a steady and dogged campaign, of few defeats and many victories. The adversaries to be met were all the ills which threaten the 'factory girl'—poisoning by lead or phosphorus or arsenic or mercury, insanitary or unventilated rooms, accidents from unsafe

machinery, phthisis, anthrax, overstrain, truck and sweating, and more besides."

We have travelled far since the days of the climbing boys, the deformed mill children, the infant mine "trappers," of which we have been recently reminded by the publication of Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's life of Lord Shaftesbury. We have come to realise more that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that we are all responsible, some more, some less, for evil conditions which should be remedied.

But there is some danger now that protection in the case of women may become obstruction, which is the reason why feminists look askance at rules which apply to women only. That, however, is another story, and the work of the Women Inspectors calls only for our gratitude.

No one could be better fitted than Dame Adelaide Anderson to write the history of their achievements. As Viscount Cave reminds us: "Dame Adelaide Anderson went through it all and for twenty-four out of the twenty-eight years with which the volume is concerned, filled the responsible position of Chief Woman Inspector with untiring devotion and conspicuous success."

All believers in women's work should read her book, and non-believers, too, that they may find conversion.

L. DE ALBERTI.

* "Women in the Factory: An Administrative Adventure, 1893-1921." By Dame Adelaide Anderson. With a Foreword by Viscount Cave, G.C.M.G. (Murray, 7/6 net).

Next month we shall deal with the Report on Domestic Service.

Travelling Light

No! junior members of St. Joan's Alliance, this is not to be a scientific dissertation on light. I am not going to impress on you that light travels at the velocity of 186,000 miles per second. I am going to deal with a far more practical and personal subject. The big game hunter who goes to Africa for a shooting expedition travels light; for months beforehand he gets catalogues from the Army and Navy Stores or Gamages and studies them. He works out the minimum amount of kit he can take with him to the fraction of an ounce.

The professional woman who takes her holiday in Brittany travels light; her suitcase is of the least heavy Willesden green canvas, her toilet articles are reduced to a minimum, her clothing well thought out so that it may be adapted to any circumstances in which she may find herself. She knows she will probably have to carry her luggage herself on to the cross-channel steamer.

All wise people travel light; it is out-of-date to be cumbered with heavy trunks and hold-alls.

Do we, the members of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance travel light? Do we discard our superfluities, do we give away what may be of use to others, do we dispose of our rubbish, not quite useless, to those who could do with it? Do we, as stewards of the gifts that have been bestowed on us, impart them to those who will find them of value and assistance? I fear me that we do quite otherwise; we hoard and collect and save and keep. Our wardrobes are full of clothes we never wear or intend to wear again, and yet we cling to them. Our bookshelves groan under books we never read and yet we clutch them as a miser grasps his gold. Our rooms are filled with ornaments and knick knacks on which we spend valuable time in dusting, and yet we could be quit of them with advantage.

Now is the time to overhaul our temporary possessions, for St. Joan's Alliance is to have a stall at the Green, Gold and White Fair, to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, Friday and Saturday, November 23rd and 24th.

Let us pack up our superfluities and send them without delay to Miss Barry, 55, Berners Street, Oxford Street, W.1.

Let our watchword be:—*Travel Light.*

M.F.

International Notes.

We are delighted to note the vigorous stand that is being made by our able Baltimore contemporary, *Equal Rights*, against any discriminatory legislation "for women only." With proper industrial legislation for all there would be no need for special laws affecting women workers only. Moreover, those who most strongly urge the need are sometimes those who are most interested in driving women out of the industrial field altogether.

We are always full of admiration for the energy displayed by our American confrères of the National Woman's Party. They seem to give their legislators no rest where women's grievances are concerned. Recently they organised a big deputation, led by Mrs. Whittic, of Syracuse, to Governor Smith, urging that all labour legislation should be on equal lines as regards the sexes, and were most cordially received by him.

* * * *

Alice Berthet, writing in *La Française*, on "What women can do against bad books," points out very truly that it is not only a question of immoral literature, but also of novels written specially for girls, which so often "flatter their tendency to sentimental dreaming, warp their judgment and give them a wholly illusory impression of life . . . She is encouraged by such books to secure a husband for herself at all costs either by coquetry or intrigue, instead of seeking to create a life for herself."

* * * *

The *Luxemburger Frau* prints an article from a mother protesting against the fact that she has no word to say in the education of her boys. They must go to school and they must learn whatever the school authorities require of them, and though the mother is always held in after life to be largely responsible for the results of her children's upbringing, she is the last person in the world to be consulted about it. V.M.C.

THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL PARLIAMENT.

The League of Nations is now accepted by large groups of people of nearly all nationalities as the parliament of nations. It is not, however, so widely known that there also exists the world's industrial parliament—the International Labour Organisation (known as the I.L.O.) of the League of Nations.

When the Peace Treaty was being drawn up it was realised that political peace could not be secured without social and industrial peace; therefore, Part XIII of the Treaty provided for the constitution of the I.L.O. It is an autonomous organisation of the League: membership of the League entails membership of the I.L.O., at the same time a State may belong to the I.L.O. without belonging to the League.

The spirit that inspired the creation of the I.L.O. is expressed in the following words of Article 23 of Part XIII of the Covenant: "The League will endeavour to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend."

These ideals form the basis of the Labour Charter, that sets forth the guiding principles upon which are founded the draft conventions and recommendations adopted at the Annual Conference of the I.L.O. Two of these principles are of particular interest to women; one states "that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value," and the other "that each State should make provision for a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the employed."

The representation at the annual conference of this international industrial parliament—which has met four times—is two Government, one workers', and one employers' representatives respectively, from each of its 56 member-States. Technical advisers, accompanying the delegates, also attend the conferences, and when questions specially affecting women are to be considered, the Treaty has provided that at least one of these should be a woman. Moreover, at the last Conference, two of the delegates were women.

In addition to the Conference there is a Governing Body which controls the International Labour Office. It meets at least three or four times a year, and its twenty-four members include twelve Government representatives, six employers, and six workers. Women are also entitled to act as delegates to the Body. Similarly the Secretariat of the International Labour Office includes women on its staff.

The draft conventions and recommendations must be considered by the national parliaments of members within a limit of 18 months of their adoption by the Conference, and a convention, when ratified by any country, becomes a law on its Statute Book. The questions which have up to the present been considered by the I.L.O., and which have been provided for in the measures adopted at its Conferences, fall into five big groups:—general conditions of workers in factories; conditions of workers in dangerous industries; in maritime undertakings; in agriculture; and also emigrants and unemployed persons.

With the exception of principles such as the 48 hours week, the weekly rest day and problems connected, amongst others, with unemployment and dangerous processes which concern men and women employees, the measures of outstanding significance have been in the interests of women and children.

It is not possible in a short article to give many details of the work of the I.L.O. in respect of unemployment and emigration; the policy underlying its recommendations in these connections is always closer co-ordination and interchange of information between the countries or agencies concerned. Free public employment exchanges are on the forefront of this part of its activities; as is also the care of emigrants on the way to their destination.

It may well be asked what has been the result of these attempts to raise the standard of the world's workers, and to give them that protection which is their due.

In the West many countries have given effect to the draft conventions and recommendations; while the results obtained in the East have, perhaps, exceeded even the hopes of optimists. In India children may no

longer be sent into the mines, transport services or power factories employing more than ten workers, neither may they work in these industries for longer than six hours a day under the age of 12 years.

China has created provisional Factory Regulations, one of which prevents the employment of boys under 10 and girls under 12. Persia, which in some districts was crippling tiny children for life by the conditions under which they were compelled to weave carpets, will not allow children in those localities to work under 10 years old, or for more than eight hours a day. In fact, the results occurring month by month in these eastern countries mark an epoch in the industrial history of the world. But they have still far to travel. India to-day has thousands of women toiling in her mines; China, until her new legislation comes into force, uses children of eight or younger in the textile mills for twelve hours a day, where through their tiredness, and lack of safeguards for machinery, hideous accidents often occur. In the machine industries the hours are still sometimes fourteen to seventeen a day; and some match factory employees, including young children, work from 4 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Clearly, however, the full value of the adoption of these reforms by any nation cannot be obtained without an adequate form of inspection to ensure not only their practical application, but to estimate their effects—socially and economically; and moreover, to facilitate comparative studies, internationally, of industrial problems.

It will be remembered that the Covenant laid down that each State should have a "system of inspection" to secure the protection of labour. In fulfilment of this provision of the Peace Treaty, the subject chosen for discussion at the fifth Conference of the I.L.O. which meets in Geneva this October, is "the General Principles for the Organisation of Factory Inspection." Clearly this is a question of world-wide importance, and of equal importance to women as to men. It is, moreover, a subject requiring close study, including, as it must, consideration of the functions and powers of factory inspectors: the kind of labour laws that should fall under their supervision: the status and scope of women factory inspectors: and above all,

the custom, tradition, and industrial development of each country in which a system of factory inspection is established.

Bearing in mind these difficulties, the Governing Body of the I.L.O. has suggested that any decisions arrived at by this conference should take the form of a Recommendation to Governments. Thus no hard and fast rules will be laid down; but it is hoped that the foundation will be laid of general principles for international factory inspection.

MARJORIE E. COHEN.

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A NEW APPEAL.

At the General Meeting on October 20th, Miss FitzGerald, our Chairman, made an inspiring appeal to members to rally to the support of the Society under its new name which they had chosen. She proposed a new effort, by which members undertake to subscribe *one shilling monthly* towards the office rent. Only ninety monthly subscribers are needed to secure the whole amount, and already a sixth of the number has promised. The names of these are published above, together with others who have kindly given donations. Surely there are many more who would gladly subscribe a shilling monthly to secure the office for the Society. To many, a shilling is so easily spent. Why not save it instead and send it to the office on the first day of each month, in any kind—cash, postal order or even stamps will be welcomed!

G. JEFFERY.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

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Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.
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All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 1s. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

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WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., Nov. 14th—"Old English Music." 8-15 p.m. SIR RICHARD TERRY, Mus. Doc., Chairman, Miss Cecilia Hill.
Wed., Nov. 21st—"The Permanent Court of International Justice." 8-16 p.m. Mr. HUGH H. L. BELLOT, M.A., D.C.L. Chairman, Miss Chrystal Macmillan.
Wed., Nov. 28th—"Some aspects of China." 8-15 p.m. Mrs. STAN HARDING.
Wed., Dec. 5th—"Medicine and Faith Healing." 8-15 p.m. Miss LETITIA FAIRFIELD, C.B.E., M.D., D.P.H. Chairman, The Rev. Francis A. P. Aveling, D.D., D.Sc.
Wed., Dec. 12th—"Parliamentary Bills of 1923 relating to Women." 8-15 p.m. Mrs. HUBBACK.

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Tuesday, Nov. 20th, at 5-30 p.m. Speaker, Councillor Mrs. V. M. CRAWFORD on the "Guardianship, Maintenance and Custody of Infants Bill."

Tuesday, Dec. 4th, at 5-30 p.m. Speaker, Mrs. BEER, M.A., on "The Trade Boards Bill."

Tea 5 p.m., 9d.

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