

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

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

—Francis Thompson.

A FRENCH PLEA FOR THE VOTE.

BY V. M. CRAWFORD.

It is a constant subject of surprise to many of us—even of mystification—that the French people should be so slow in conferring full political rights on their women, rights which to-day are enjoyed by the women of the greater part of the civilised world. How is it, we ask each other, that arguments in favour of the equality of the sexes which have been accepted as conclusive in so many countries, should continue to fall in France on deaf ears? One answer at least to this query is to be found in some illuminating pages on “*Féminisme Politique et Catholicisme*” in M. Georges Goyau’s recent volume of essays “*Catholicisme et Politique*.” And the conclusion to be drawn from them seems to be that in order to convince the French people we must present our arguments from a rather different angle to that with which we ourselves are most familiar. Briefly, as we all know, amid a Protestant and highly individualistic society the most effective plea for the vote in England has been an individualistic one, based on the essential equality of men and women as individuals with equal rights and equal responsibilities.

M. Goyau starts from a different basis. He is a convinced feminist, a believer in the desirability of women taking part, through the ballot-box, in the political life of the nation. He holds that France is still a Catholic country and that if she is to be won over to this fundamental change it must be by an appeal to her Catholic conscience and her Catholic tradition. So he begins by reminding his readers how, in the Catholic middle-ages, women who were heads of fami-

lies enjoyed many “male” privileges, how Innocent IV. formally conceded the right to vote to women over the age of 14, how under Philippe le Bel women voted for the States-General and so forth. From all this he concludes that the Middle Ages “did not deem the public work of women incompatible with the observance of their Christian duties as wives and mothers.” And he points out very pertinently that it was not a question of sex or of individuals, but rather a question of representing, to the advantage of all, certain groups and interests and social entities. It was, on the other hand, in the anti-Christian XVIII. century that women’s legal and social position sank to its lowest and that their special interests were most widely ignored.

To-day, M. Goyau argues, the whole body of Catholic social teaching which has developed in France during the last forty years, is opposed to excessive individualism, and aims at the due representation in the councils of the State of all its component parts: of the professions, of social groupings and above all of the family. It is here that the need for woman suffrage becomes immediately apparent.

“In a representative system,” he writes, “in which the voice of the bachelor is as important as that of the husband or even as that of the father of ten children, the representation of the family is in no way favoured by the father having a single vote. Give the mother also a vote and the family is represented by two votes. . . . Again, in a representative system where the man alone

votes, a family of which the male head has died remains wholly unrepresented. . . . The vote of the mother would compensate for this to a certain extent."

The argument is plain. If, as a Catholic, you believe in the sanctity of family life, in the stability of the family as the basis of our social well-being, you must, logically, believe in woman suffrage as an essential condition of fighting with success the many dangers with which family life is beset.

M. Goyau, however, is too sincere a feminist to argue his case, as do the promoters of the *vote familial*, on the family alone, as though a woman could render no services to the State outside her home circle. "Professional organisation" is another of the main planks of the Catholic social platform, and here too women must be in a position to assert their views concerning wages, hygiene, hours of labour, and so forth, for admittedly, in industrial matters, masculine and feminine interests are frequently in conflict. "We, social Catholics, desire to invest women with economic prerogatives at once very wide and very thoroughly interpreted."

After reading the distinguished Academician it will be difficult for Frenchwomen to argue their indifference or antagonism to the vote on the plea of religious conscience. Most effectively he cuts the ground from under their feet. They simply cannot, he tells them, take up, *a priori*, a sceptical or grudging attitude towards the suffrage. And here we could wish that many Catholics on this side of the Channel could read M. Goyau's gently sarcastic and persuasive pages. Even to-day, when the vote is won, though not indeed, as Pope Innocent suggested, for women over fourteen, many still regard the right, if not with actual disapproval, at least with profound distrust as a weapon that is likely to recoil on our own heads. Others accept it in a narrow, somewhat parochial spirit and fail to grasp the great potentialities for good in civic as well as in religious matters that the vote has placed in our hands. And only a minority seems to have understood so far that in the future the vast international questions of war and of peace—questions on the right

solving of which the prosperity and happiness of millions of families depend,—will rest in future as much in the hands of the women as of the men. The issues before all Europe to-day are so tremendous that one would wish to see the hearts of women stirred to their depths with a realisation of all that it has become in their power to achieve for humanity. And here too the Pope has spoken and given a lead to all who would work for the pacification of Europe.

International Notes.

The *Vote Familial* excites such increasing interest in France that Mme. de Witt-Schlumberger (in LA FRANÇAISE) explains what she considers should be the attitude of suffragists towards the proposal. She regrets that a Bill for the *Vote Familial* should be introduced into the Chamber at all, especially at this juncture, and declares that the present duty of suffragists is to work for the vote pure and simple. If and when that is won the *Vote Familial* can be taken on its merits; if the votes it confers for the children are to be equally divided between the parents the proposal may be supported, but no approval should be given to any Bill which excludes unmarried women from the suffrage.

The two days annual congress of the National Council of French Women was held last month in Paris under the presidency of Mme. Avril de Ste Croix and passed off very successfully.

LA FEMME BELGE publishes some interesting statistics concerning women's work in the United States. It appears that over eight million women, or one-fifth of the female adult population, go out to work. Since the war the occupations of women have varied considerably; fewer women are employed in dress-making and in domestic work and 40% fewer in agriculture. On the other hand there has been a great increase of women in factories and industry of all sorts, as well as of teachers, nurses and librarians and of course in the telegraph and telephone services.

(Continued on page 65.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

We offer our hearty congratulations to Lady Astor on the success of her Bill to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquor to persons under eighteen, for consumption on licensed premises. In the House of Commons only ten members were found to vote against it, among them Sir M. Archer Shee, and 257 voted for it. The Bill, introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Astor, passed its third reading. We hope it will now reach the Statute Book.

The Matrimonial Causes Bill received the Royal Assent on July 20th. It is rare that a private member's bill becomes law, but this one had a strong backing in both Houses.

Lady Astor seized the opportunity of the recent Police Vote Debate in the House of Commons to raise again the question of Women Police. She reminded the House that the Departmental Committee, set up in 1920 to investigate the work of women police, had unanimously reported that in thickly populated areas there was urgent need for the employment of women police. The Home Secretary declares himself in sympathy with the work of women police, but cannot hold out the hope of increasing the number beyond the existing twenty. It appears that the country is too poor to raise the trifling sum required. We should have thought that the country could not afford to economise on so important a work of social reform.

We are glad to see that the question of criminal assaults on children and the leniency of the sentences inflicted was raised in the House of Commons by Mr. Frank Briant. The women societies have constantly protested against this leniency. The Home Secretary declared that there was no evidence to show that this horrible crime was on the increase. He promised that the Home Office would watch the matter very carefully.

The resignation of Don Sturzo from the post of political secretary of the Partito Popolare is a great blow to the party. Don Sturzo has taken this step so as not to give adversaries of all shades of opinion any

further pretext, however unjustifiable, to create misunderstandings as to the relations between the Popular Party and the Church, and to drag the Church into political disputes which the Party, having full autonomy, has to meet, in the realization of its programme. It must have been a great sacrifice for the popular Sicilian priest to resign from a party of which he was the supreme and beloved leader. The Partito Popolare stands for Woman Suffrage, and a manifesto to that effect was issued by Don Sturzo, in name of his Party, on the eve of the Rome Congress. The Party sent a fraternal delegate to the Congress.

The Party has a daily paper, which they are good enough to exchange for the CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

At a Meeting of the Board of Officers of the International Council of Women, recently held, under the Presidency of Lady Aberdeen, at the House of Cromar, Aberdeenshire, it was decided to hold a Conference of Women's International Organisations in London early next year, to discuss the prevention of the causes of war and how women can best assist in promoting the cause of World Peace.

In order to safeguard the objects of the Conference, it was decided that no allusion should be made to the facts of the late War, or to political controversies arising therefrom.

A comprehensive draft programme has already been prepared under the following headings:—The international mind in individuals to include the moral and spiritual basis of human relationships, Education in Schools and Colleges and Education of Citizens, and the international mind in Governments—to include improvement in security, the democratic control of foreign affairs, international organisation of humanitarian activities and the reference of all disputes to arbitration or conciliation by an all inclusive League of Nations. The W.I.C. has undertaken to organise the Conference, at the request of a joint committee of women's international organisations, set up to consider whether such a conference would be practicable.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., 1. Tel. Museum 4181.

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

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THE TREVETHIN REPORT ON VENEREAL DISEASE.*

The National Society for Combating Venereal Disease and the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease have joined hands over the Trevethin Report and are prepared to work together to further the policy of that Report. As the two societies, both anxious to combat the ravages and the spread of venereal disease, have hitherto been at loggerheads, their acceptance of the report is of sufficient importance. What is the social reformer to think of the report? On the whole I think he, or she, may find cause for satisfaction in the result of this enquiry, undertaken by a committee of distinguished and impartial medical men and women.

The terms of reference were as follows:

"To consider and report upon the best medical measures for preventing venereal disease in the civil community, having regard to administrative practicability, including cost."

The C.W.S.S. has never expressed an opinion as to the value or the lawfulness of self-disinfection. What we, and others, have set our faces against was the proposal to use public funds for a wholesale propaganda in favour of self-disinfection and the distribution by the State of prophylactic packets.

As to this the Report says:

"We think that properly and promptly applied disinfection in the case of an individual man would almost certainly prove effectual, but that so far as the community at large is concerned no sufficient case has been made to justify the introduction at the public expense of a general system of facilities either for self-disinfection or skilled dis-

infection, and wherever there is a limited amount of public money available, we have no doubt that the money spent on

- treatment of disease;
- continuous education of the community in regard to the nature and dangers of venereal disease and the importance of seeking prompt and skilled treatment, and
- the elimination of those conditions of life which tend to foster promiscuous intercourse and the spread of disease,

will be money better spent than any money expended on establishing a general system for affording facilities for disinfection."

The Committee feel, however, that special measures might be required in certain areas, such as large seaports, and that local health authorities who are able to make to the Ministry of Health a special case for some such special measure as public ablution centres, should be allowed to try the experiment, at any rate for a limited period, under the present system, by which a contribution towards the expense is made by the State.

"In this way there may ultimately be built up a body of experience of great value in determining future policy."

This paragraph leaves the enemy a loophole, and the women societies will still need to be on the alert.

As regards the notification of venereal disease, the conclusions of the Committee will be welcomed by these same societies, for it bears out what has been said constantly from feminist platforms. That is, that any system of general compulsory notification of

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

(Continued from page 62.)

The *GIORNALE DELLA DONNA* is of opinion that the promised Bill conferring the municipal vote on women will pass through the Chamber with very little opposition as practically all parties are now pledged to support it. Its only defect is that it does not go nearly far enough.

* * * *

In reply to various correspondents Countess Patrizi writes in the *BOLLETTINO* of the Italian Catholic Women's Union that members of the Union cannot also become members of non-Catholic and neutral societies of an educational or social nature.

* * * *

The women of the Ukraine were represented by delegates at the recent Rome Congress, and the National Committee of the Ukrainian Women has now issued, in rather quaint English, an appeal to Europe against the fate that has befallen the Ukraine, its independence crushed out of existence on the one side by Russia and on the other by Poland. It is pathetic to read that during the short period of independence between 1917 and 1919, Ukrainian women enjoyed the political suffrage to such good effect that in the first Rada, or parliament, there were nine women members.

* * * *

We have received from Graz an encouraging Report of the good work that is being carried on throughout Austria to combat the demoralisation due to war and revolution by a recent organisation known as the Austrian *Volkerwacht*, of which the V. Rev. Dr. Ude is the President. Dr. Ude is well-known beyond the confines of the former Austrian Empire as a keen abolitionist, and under his guidance the *Volkerwacht* is carrying on an invaluable work by voluntary agencies and by the publication of numerous telling pamphlets and leaflets to build up once more on Catholic principles a sound moral public opinion in Austria. This is an essential preliminary to the abolition of State Regulation, which is one of the aims of the organisation. Needless to add that the work is very expensive to carry on and funds are difficult to raise.

V.M.C.

venereal disease would tend to concealment and would prove a backward step. The Report goes on to say that: "There is another grave difficulty in the way of any form of notification, reinforced by measures to compel treatment, that in the present state of knowledge there is no standard of non-infectivity or cure generally accepted by the medical profession, and until this has been attained it is difficult to see how any system involving notification and compulsory measures of treatment could be applied."

The Committee suggest, and here everyone is agreed, that the main objective should be the improvement and extension of the present clinic system, greater facilities for treatment, a more adequate provision of beds for in-patient treatment, the establishment of more hostels for women attending clinics and living under social conditions which render it difficult for them to treat themselves in their homes, and the establishment of more homes or hospital beds for the treatment of children.

The Committee were confined by the terms of reference to the consideration of medical measures, nevertheless they point out that there are other measures which should be employed contemporaneously with medical measures if the later are to be successful. The community should be made to realise that: Promiscuous intercourse is the main cause of the prevalence of venereal disease; that there is no absolute preventive except continence, and that a single exposure may result in infection; that a large number of sufferers are innocent persons, and especially women and children.

As far as it is possible to draw conclusions, the Committee are of opinion that venereal disease is once more, as before the war, substantially declining.

It is not surprising that this eminently sane report should have been welcomed by persons of all shades of opinion. It should give panic-mongers their quietus.

L. DE ALBERTI.

WOMAN DELIGATE FOR THE LEAGUE.

Dame Edith Lyttleton has been appointed substitute delegate to the Fourth Assembly of the League of Nations. We now look to the Government to appoint a woman delegate to the forthcoming Labour Conference.

American Women Celebrate Anniversary of First Equal Rights Conference.

(Communicated by the National Woman's Party).

On July 20th, 21st and 22nd, the women of the United States of America will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first Woman's Rights Convention which was held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19th and 20th, 1848.

Under the leadership of the National Woman's Party, women from every part of the country will assemble at Seneca Falls to do honour to the little band of pioneers who first raised the banner of Equal Rights in the United States.

In issuing the call to this anniversary meeting, Miss Alice Paul, Vice-President of the Woman's Party stresses the fact that the Seneca Falls convention of 1848 protested against every form of the subjection of women, and demanded equal rights in the franchise, in education, in industry, in the professions, in political office, in marriage, in personal freedom, in control of property, in guardianship of children, in making contracts, in the church, and in the leadership of all moral and public movements. Equality in the franchise is the only one of these demands which the lapse of seventy-five years has brought to fulfilment for the women of the United States.

The Woman's Party meeting at Seneca Falls on July 20th will mark the beginning of a new era in the Equal Rights struggle. At that time, the Party will probably vote to introduce in the national Congress an amendment to the Federal Constitution providing that there shall be no distinction between the rights of men and women within the jurisdiction of the United States of America.

This action will be based upon (a) a complete survey of the discriminations against women which still exist in the laws and customs of the forty-eight states which make up the United States of America; (b) two years' experience of the Woman's Party working to secure in the legislatures of these forty-eight states the enactment of laws which will remove these discriminations; and (c) the precedent of the Susan B. Anthony amendment to the federal constitution which became a part of that instrument in 1920, and which

gave to all women in the country complete equality with men in the franchise, bringing to a close that one phase of the seventy year old Equal Rights campaign.

The Woman's Party points out that complete equality has already been secured to women in the constitutions of a number of the European States. It calls upon the Congress of the United States of America to follow the example of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Esthonia, Germany and Lithuania.

The memorial ceremonies planned for July 21st and 22nd will be both impressive and beautiful. The ceremony of July 21st will be held on the banks of the Seneca River. After the audience has been seated, a procession of 500 girls carrying the purple, white and gold banners of the Woman's Party and clothed in surplices of the same colour, will file out of the Episcopal Church and encircle the audience. They will be preceded by a choir singing, and by the standard-bearers of the Woman's Party, carrying three banners. One of these banners will bear the words, "Failure is impossible," the last words spoken in public by Susan B. Anthony, who, for almost sixty years led the struggle for suffrage in her country. The second banner will bear the inscription:

"Forward Out of Darkness,
Leave Behind the Night,
Forward Out of Error,
Forward Into Light."

This banner was carried by Inez Milholland Boissevain,—who later died a martyr to the suffrage cause,—in the first suffrage parade ever held in America. It was used by the Woman's Party through the years in which it picketed the White House and carried on militant demonstrations at the national capital. On the third banner will be inscribed a couplet of Walt Whitman's: "Without Extinction is Liberty; Without Retrograde is Equality." This banner, also, was used by the militant suffragists in the closing years of the suffrage struggle.

On the afternoon of July 22nd, the members of the Woman's Party Conference will be taken to Rochester, New York, in motor

cars furnished by the City of Rochester. There they will be joined by the townspeople in a pilgrimage to the grave of Susan B. Anthony who is buried in the beautiful Mt. Hope Cemetery. Miss Anthony, who died in 1906, was the leader and inspiration of the suffrage movement in America for more than sixty years. She was also one of the group who took a leading part in the agitation for the emancipation of the negro race at a time when abolitionists were in danger of mob violence. She was one of the leaders of the temperance movement. Her greatest pre-occupation was, however, the equality of women, and it is primarily to her unwearying and self-sacrificing activity that the feminist movement in America owes its present advancement.

The pilgrimage to her grave will be headed by the Mayor and City officials of Rochester and the friends and relatives of Miss Anthony. The standard-bearers of the Woman's Party will follow, carrying the three banners described above. After them will march groups of women representing the professions and interests to whose welfare Susan B. Anthony devoted her life. Among these groups, will be women teachers, students, lawyers, doctors, musicians, nurses, artists, authors, journalists, temperance workers, business women, women in industry, club women, and representatives of the civic bodies of Rochester, and following them the Woman's Party delegations of women from every state in the Union.

At the grave, brief addresses will be made by the Mayor of Rochester, and by a representative of the Woman's Party.

In all of this celebration, the Woman's Party has in view two cardinal objects: (1) the perpetuation of the memory of the great feminist leaders, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony and their co-workers; and (2) the adoption of a plan of action which will bring the campaign for Equal Rights launched by Lucretia Mott and carried on by Susan B. Anthony to a speedy and glorious conclusion.

Miss Emily Fortey will represent the C.W.S.S. at the "Semaines Sociales" at Grenoble, July 30th to August 5th, and Miss Sylvia Grieson will be our representative at the Third International Catholic Congress, to be held at Constance, August 10th to the 15th.

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Please do not forget the C.W.S.S. on your holidays. Next month there will be the rent to pay again. You can also help very much by making things for the Christmas Sale, which will be held as usual in the Autumn.

G. JEFFERY.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Thomas, Cranford, Leasome Road, Wallasey.

We ask the prayers of our members for the repose of the soul of Miss E. M. O'Callaghan, late Chairman of our Branch, who died on July 22nd.

We offer our sincerest sympathy to Mrs. and Miss O'Callaghan.

The C.W.S.S. was represented at the Requiem by Mrs. and Miss Mills and Miss Tynan.

Miss F. A. Barry represented the C.W.S.S. on the deputation to the Home Secretary, deputising for the Premier, organised by the Six Point Group. The deputation, introduced by Lady Astor, dealt with the failure of the Sex Disqualification Removal Act. Lady Rhondda spoke of the exclusion of Peeresses from the House of Lords; Mrs. Wintringham dealt with the inequalities in the Civil Service and Women Police; Lady Barrett spoke of the dismissal of married women in Public Services; Miss Gray, M.A., J.P., spoke of Equal Opportunities in University Education; and Miss Voyce of the Dismissal of Married Teachers. The Home Secretary received the suggestions and views of the deputation sympathetically, and promised to lay the same before the Prime Minister and the departmental heads.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.

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INTERNATIONAL

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