

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. XVII, No. 10.

15th NOVEMBER, 1931.

Price Twopence.

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

—Francis Thompson.

## The Nationality of Married Women.

BY LEONORA DE ALBERTI.

The Committee of representatives of women's international organisations, set up by the Council of the League of Nations, to consider the question of the nationality of married women, did excellent work. Behind the scenes no doubt much energy must have been expended on harmonizing the different points of view which the members had brought from many countries, where the position of women is in different stages of development. Herein lies the difficulty of International Conventions. Nor did the Committee fail to note in their Report that they realised the far-reaching consequences for women, either for greater freedom or greater subjection, in the project of the League of Nations for the codification of International Law, which may lead to the establishment of a World Code of Law. It can be said with truth that the League of Nations, in some of its aspects, may be a boon to women, or it may be a calamity.

The agreed Report presented to the Assembly begins with a statement by the Women's Consultative Committee with regard to the Hague Nationality Convention, declaring that it is opposed to the Convention inasmuch as it differentiates between men and women as regards nationality.

2. The Committee expresses its support of the proposal brought before the Hague Codification Conference by the delegation from Chile for a world agreement on nationality, reading:

"The Contracting States agree that, from the going into effect of this Convention there shall be no distinction based on sex in their law and

practice relating to nationality."

3. The Committee, finally, urges the Assembly of the League of Nations to take immediate steps:

(a) To bring about the reconsideration of the Hague Nationality Convention.

(b) To submit to the Governments for ratification a new Convention founded on the principle of equality between men and women with regard to nationality.

After enumerating the articles of the Hague Convention which relate to women, the Report deals with the opposition to the Convention; the demand for re-opening the question; and, in dealing with the present status of the Convention, points out that no Convention in fact exists, but only a proposal for one; since only two countries, Monaco and Norway, have ratified it as yet, and according to Article 25 and 26 the Convention can only come into operation when ten countries have ratified it.

The Committee also deals with the arguments against equality in Nationality, such as conflicts of Law; unity of the family; (an argument which is known to many of us as a scarecrow brandished on high whenever some piece of justice is claimed by women) and the question of the nationality of children.

The Report concludes with the practical application of equality in nationality. The Committee point out that the most important and necessary applications of this principle are:

(a) That marriage should no more affect the nationality of a woman than it affects the nationality of a man;



(b) That the right of a woman to retain her nationality or to change it by naturalisation, denationalisation or denaturalisation should not be denied or abridged because she is a married woman;

(c) That the nationality of a woman, whether married or unmarried, should not be changed or lost except under conditions which cause a man to change or lose his nationality;

(d) That facilities of choice should be given to either spouse on marriage to take the nationality of the other;

(e) That with respect to the derivation of nationality from a parent, the nationality of one parent should be given no preference over that of the other.

In conclusion, the Committee calls to the attention of the Assembly that to write into this Convention an unequal treatment of men and women is in direct opposition to the principle laid down by the Assembly that the spirit of the codification "should not confine itself to the mere registration of existing rules, but should aim at adapting them, as far as possible, to contemporary conditions of international life"; a principle also accepted by the Preparatory Committee of the Codification Conference when it declared that "the work of codification involves the risk of setback in international law if the content of the codification instrument is less advanced than the actually existing law." The Codification of International Law should be founded on equality and justice.

The Report is signed by the International Council of Women, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Inter-American Commission of Women, Equal Rights International, World Union of Women for International Concord, All-Asian Conference for Women.

The International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship and the International Federation of University Women sign the report on the understanding that the equality asked for includes the right of a married woman to her independent nationality and that the nationality of a woman shall not be changed by reason only of marriage or a change during marriage in the nationality of her husband.

The International Federation of University Women gives its support to the report so far as it deals with a woman's own nationality and takes no position in so far as the report deals with the derivation of the nationality of a child from its mother, since the

Federation has taken no decision on this aspect of nationality.

Shortly before the meeting of the Assembly, the President of the Union Internationale des Ligues Féminines Catholiques, Mme. Steenberghe-Engeringh, presented to Sir Eric Drummond a Memorandum, protesting on behalf of her League, in the name of family unity, against the principle of equal nationality—the unity of the family, and not the emancipation of women, should predominate. That all branches of the League had not been consulted was made apparent by the important fact that the Catholic Women's League of Great Britain dissociated itself entirely from the Memorandum presented to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, and wired to Geneva making that repudiation clear. In fact the C.W.L. of Great Britain had already lent support in this country to the demand that a woman shall not lose her nationality on marriage to a foreigner.

"The Catholic Woman's Outlook" (October) states that the deputation to Sir Eric Drummond "was authorised by the permanent Bureau of the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues, and not by a conference composed of delegates from constituent Leagues. The Bureau is an administrative executive. We understand that earlier in the year the English League had taken part in a deputation to the Home Secretary in support of a bill now before Parliament. Because of this fact, and because no resolution on the subject had been passed by a conference of the International Union, the English League notified the Secretariat of the League of Nations that it was not associated with the memorandum presented by the Bureau.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance lost no time in writing to the British Delegation and to Sir Eric Drummond, lest any misunderstanding should occur, and the I.C.W.L.'s protest be taken to mean that some Catholic principle was involved in a demand in which Catholics are as free as any other body of people.

The letter from St. Joan's S.P.A. asks delegates not to be misled into thinking that a matter of Catholic principle is involved in the demand for equal nationality rights. It points out that the unity of the family was brought forward by Catholics, and others, as an argument against the Married Women's Property Act, and Woman Suffrage. It proceeds to point out that of the five countries in which men and women have equal nationality rights:

Continued p. 86.

## Notes and Comments.

We cannot comment upon the General Election, which has given the National Government so great a majority. Many of our readers will be rejoicing, and many will be lamenting. We may regret, however, the defeat of the Labour women M.P.'s., not one of whom retained her seat. St. Joan's S.P.A., as we have frequently said, desires to see women of every party in the House. Speaking generally, the Election has shown that women share the fate of their parties. The ten new women M.P.'s., whom we cordially welcome, are Conservative supporters of the National Government. We give below the full list of women in the New Parliament.

We have lost some good friends among defeated candidates, but we rejoice that Lady Astor and Miss Eleanor Rathbone are back to fight our battles, and our good friend, Mr. Frank Briant.

A correspondent sends us a chatty newsheet published by the Headquarters of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, and used as propaganda among women in the provinces. Cake making and shampooing are mixed up with national problems; it also provides a love story, "a little domestic comedy that has more than a little of the everlasting truth in it" . . . and so on. We cannot believe that any candidate was returned to Parliament on such balderdash, which is calculated to make an intelligent woman see red. We do not know whether the other Parties issued anything similar, but we would remind all Parties that these are the days of Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds. The writer of this sheet, "Trust a Woman to put things right," seems only to have heard of the village idiot.

We note with great pleasure the growth of the "Revue de L'Alliance Sainte Jeanne D'Arc" (French edition of the CATHOLIC CITIZEN). The current number has a particularly interesting article on Josephine Butler, founded on "La Noble vie d'une femme," by J. de Mestral Combremont.

We offer our best thanks to Miss E. Butler-Bowdon, who has again designed a charming Christmas card for St. Joan's S.P.A. It represents St. Francis and the first Crib, and can be obtained from the Office, 55 Berners Street,

W.I.; price 3d. each, 2s. 6d. a dozen, and 18s. 6d. per 100.

We congratulate our member, Mrs. Mills, on the birth of a daughter, Margaret Clare.

## OBITUARY.

We offer our deep sympathy to our member, Miss O'Callaghan, on the death of her mother, a pioneer of woman suffrage, who did splendid work for our cause in Liverpool. Her daughter was at one time chairman of our Liverpool Branch.—R.I.P.

## WOMEN M.P.'s.

**Former M.P.'s. Returned.**—(1) Viscountess Astor (U), Sutton, Plymouth; Maj. 10,204. (2) Duchess of Atholl (U), Kinross and West Perthshire; Maj. 5,695. (3) Miss Megan Lloyd George (L), Anglesey; Maj. 4,227. (4) Miss Eleanor Rathbone (Ind.), Combined English Universities; Maj. 1,464. (5) Countess of Iveagh (U), Southend-on-Sea; Maj. 38,823.

**New Members (Conservatives)**—(6) Miss Thelma Cazalet, East Islington; Maj. 14,110. (7) Mrs. Ida Copeland, Stoke; Maj. 6,654. (8) Miss M. Graves, South Hackney; Maj. 3,093. (9) Miss F. Horsbrugh, Dundee; Maj. 15,983. (10) The Hon. Mary Pickford, North Hammersmith; Maj. 6,977. (11) Mrs. N. Runge, Rotherhithe; Maj. 130. (12) Mrs. H. Shaw, Bothwell; Maj. 2,148. (13) Mrs. H. B. Tate, Willesden; Maj. 8,360. (14) Miss Irene Ward, Wallsend; Maj. 7,606. (15) Mrs. S. A. Ward, Cannock; Maj. 4,665.

Members of St. Joan's S.P.A. gave help to several candidate supporters of our programme. Some of our members would have liked to work for a Conservative woman candidate in London, but as no answer was received to our questionnaire they felt unable to do so, but preferred to work for that staunch feminist, Mr. Frank Briant. Others members gave help to Miss Monica Whateley, Labour, who polled over 10,000 votes at St. Albans. Members old and young naturally took a keen interest in the Election, and Mrs. Jeffery, mother of our Foundress and one of our early members, did not fail to register her vote though she is now 85.



## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

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 NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

(Continued from p. 84.)

Argentine, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Soviet Union; the first four named are Catholic countries. That Belgium, another Catholic country, has fairly advanced legislation on the subject. That the ecclesiastical authorities in these countries do not appear to have entered any protest on the point.

That at the time of the Codification Conference of International Law, held at the Hague, March 1930, a joint demonstration passed a resolution "that a woman, whether married or unmarried, should have the same right as a man to retain or change her nationality." Amongst those who signified their support of this resolution were two eminent Catholic ecclesiastics, the Rt. Revd. W. F. Brown, Bishop of Pella, and Don Luigi Sturzo. It was also supported by organisations of Catholic women, such as our own St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance; Féminisme Chrétien de Belgique; Ligue Catholique pour le Suffrage des Femmes, Belgium; Alliance des Femmes Catholiques, Lithuaniennes, and other organisations, of which Catholic women form a large part, such as the Union Française pour le Suffrage des Femmes; National Council of Women of Ireland, and the Comité Ukrainien pour les Droits de la Femme.

Further, the official organ of the National Catholic Welfare Council, U.S.A., April, 1931, reporting on immigration and naturalization laws passed during the third session of the 71st Congress, concludes with these words: "This part of the Act (10,672 Cable) merely renders belated justice and equality to the American woman citizen by removing the last discrimination which existed in the statute relating to the citizenship and naturalization of married women." The same paper (July, 1931) states

"that on one or two points the immigration Law still needs attention from Congress if the American-born woman is to have equal rights with the American-born man." "Evidently," says the letter from St. Joan's Alliance, "the official body of Catholics in the United States is in favour of this reform."

When the Report on the Nationality of Married Women was discussed in the Assembly, Señora Campoamor, Spain, asked that this letter might be inserted in the Minutes sent to countries, showing that certain organizations of Catholic women did not consider that the granting of equal nationality rights would have any adverse effect on the unity of the family.

Señora Vergara, speaking for the Chilean Delegation, said: "A subject of a country such as Chile, Uruguay or the Argentine, cannot help smiling when he considers the difference between the gloomy picture of society, depicted by certain delegates, when they consider the continuation of this road leading to freedom for women, and compares it with the position in his own country. Chile, whose political constitution from the start of her existence admitted perfect equality of nationality rights between the sexes, is a country in which that equality has not prejudiced in any way unity within the family. It is for that reason that my Government associates itself entirely with the steps taken by those countries which desire to attain a position which, both from the moral and the practical point of view, has given such satisfactory results."

Mr. Beckett, delegate for Great Britain, was the Rapporteur on the question of the Nationality of Women, but it was left to Dame Edith Lyttelton to speak for the British Delegation. We wish that space permitted the quotation of

her eloquent speech in full. She, too, dealt with the argument, if it can be called an argument, that equal nationality rights would destroy the unity of the family. That species of unity, she justly qualified as autocracy, a remnant of the old days when a woman was looked upon as the property of man. Such obsolete inequalities in customs and laws are things that have been left over from a different age, and should be cut out as the now useless appendix is cut out of the human body. The body politic will be all the stronger and saner for it.

In concluding her speech, Dame Edith told a charming story of an Irish Catholic Saint in the ninth century: "There was a hermit called St. Senan, and he lived on an island; the one thing he prayed for every day was that no woman should ever set foot on that island. But there was another saint called St. Canair, and she came along in a boat, and when St. Senan saw her arrive he hurried down to the shore, and said: 'God will not allow you to put a foot upon this island.' Then St. Canair made what I think must have been the first feminist speech recorded in history. She said: 'What right have you to say that I am not to set foot on this island? Did not a woman bear the Lord and wash His feet?' She also mentioned a whole lot of other things, in fact she made a most remarkable speech. In the end St. Senan let her come on the island and she lived there until she died. What we are asking you to do is to give us a place on your island. If you will do it, it will be given to us as it was to St. Canair a thousand years ago to dwell beside you in equal partnership, equal in liberty, and equal in nationality."

As our readers already know, the question has been referred to the respective countries, with a request to submit their views, for consideration, to the Thirteenth Assembly in 1932. It now remains with National Societies to persuade their Governments to do justice to women. The British Government is committed to the principle of our demand, but we must induce our believers to put their belief into practice.

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## International Notes.

In an article entitled *Pudeur Ministérielle*, *L'Egyptienne* deplores a change of spirit in the Ministry of Public Instruction in Egypt. Last year, in answer to a questionnaire forwarded by *L'Egyptienne* to the Minister for Public Instruction, Mourad Sid Ahmed Pacha, ask-

ing his views on the education of young girls, his reply was most favourable. Realising the beneficial role women exercise in the destiny of their countries, he was ready to hasten their emancipation, and to open the High Schools of Commerce and Art to girls.

Just one year later, his successor, Hilmy Issa Pacha, in an interview accorded to another paper, announces his intention of forbidding co-education of students of both sexes, and refuses to open Schools for the higher education of women, until he is assured that there is a sufficient number of candidates. The Editor of *L'Egyptienne* asks why the Department should have the right to the title Public Instruction if it refuses education to one half of the population.

\* \* \* \*

We read in *Stri Dharma* (Madras), that as the City Fathers of Peshawar gave no heed to a public request that all brothels should be removed from that city within a period of fifteen days, peaceful "picketing" of brothels and bazaars leading to them was undertaken by volunteers. The area which used always to be congested is now completely deserted. In congratulating these brave youths, *Stri Dharma* hopes that similar action will be taken if the Madras Government fails to enforce the Act for the closure of brothels, numbering about six hundred, in the city of Madras. But even before doing so demand should be made to the authorities and trustees of the Madras Temples to abolish the Devadasi service, that is the dedication of girls and young women to the gods in those temples. Our contemporary complains that the British Government on the plea of religious neutrality, is not only indifferent to this essential reform, but has failed to create a suitable machinery to enforce such laws as are already on the Statute Book for the prevention of this heinous custom. The provisions of the Penal Code prohibiting the dedication of girls under 18 have never been properly enforced.

If this be the case, are not all British citizens responsible for the misdeeds of their representatives?

## ST. JOAN'S S.P.A.

Members and friends are reminded that December 8th is the 21st anniversary of the day when Miss Jeffery and Miss Kendall planned the foundation of a Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. We hope all who can will come to the party arranged for that evening. (See enclosed handbill.)



### The Indian Women Delegates to the Round Table Conference.

St. Joan's Alliance was among those principal women's organisations invited to send a representative to the dinner given at the Lyceum Club on the evening of Michaelmas Day to the three Indian women delegates to the Round Table Conference. As well as these chief guests, many other Indians, both women and men, were present, and they came from every community in India, while the guests of British race were also numerous and included such well-known feminists as Lady Astor, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and Dr. Maude Royden. East and West met on the friendliest and easiest terms, and since nearly all the Eastern women wore their native dress the function was as picturesque as it was interesting. Mrs. Brijlal Nehru, who presided, was one of the two women who sat on the Indian Age of Consent Committee, the other being our own member, Dr. Mary Beadon. The dinner was organised by the London Committee of the Women's Indian Association and the Indian Committee of the Lyceum Club.

To those who were ignorant of India the evening afforded a surprise. Our idea of oriental women, the denizens of the zenana and the harem, was derived from fairy tales, novels and the talk of Anglo-Indian acquaintances, and it was a shock to realise that our mental attitude to them had been superior, that we had thought of them as helpless and ignorant, if not self-indulgent and indolent. But the Indian women who spoke at the dinner were not only eloquent—mere eloquence would not have upset all our preconceived notions—but also wise, well informed, single minded, courageous and dignified. They were pioneers and leaders whom it would not be fair to compare with the rank and file of our own women. But put them beside our best, even Dame Millicent Fawcett and Mrs. Pankhurst, and they still come out of the ordeal well. The British Pharisee has been rebuked once more.

Mrs. Subbarayan, the wife of the famous Chief Minister of Madras, who was the first speaker after the President, gave the impression of singular generosity and tolerance, combined with determination. Here, one felt, were the breadth and the sympathy so essential to reformers, the qualities which the fanatic lacks, generally to his undoing. She assured her audience that India is endeavouring to free herself of such evil customs as child marriage, and she begged them—one wished the petition had been less needed—not to judge Indian society

from pictures drawn in a hurry by superficial foreign observers. She looked forward to a settlement between Great Britain and India which would be based on mutual trust.

The Begum Shah Nawaz, a young and very beautiful Mahomedan woman, who was until recently in purdah, told us that women behind the veil enjoy both honour and self-respect, and was herself a witness to the truth of her statement. She was the spokesman, however, not of Mussulman women but of all the women of India, and she asked that they might have complete equality with the men who were their fellow citizens. She confessed that she had previously been in favour of the reservation of certain seats in the Indian legislatures for women, but said that she had changed this opinion because she came to realise that the women of India, especially the younger of them, are strongly opposed to such special treatment of their sex. They wish neither for privileges nor for disabilities which are not shared by man, but stand for complete equality.

Mrs. Naidu, who is a poet as well as a real orator, spoke with wit and charm and unusual power. She is past her youth, her poet's insight enriched by experience, her gifts trained by long service in the cause of liberty, her vitality strong and infectious. Like the Begum Shah Nawaz she is convinced that the men and women of India should be granted identical political and civic rights. She has handed down this gospel of equality to the younger generation, to which the Begum belongs.

It was again repeated by Mrs. Hansa Mehta, who spoke towards the end of the evening and who reminded the three delegates to the Conference that they have no mandate to ask for anything less than full equality between men and women. It is surely hardly necessary to say that St. Joan's supports this demand unreservedly. We sympathise warmly with these Indian women who have taken up a position which is exactly our own. We respect their dignity, courage and clear sightedness. We are ready to do all we can to help them.

H. D. I.

### Correspondence.

To the Editor, CATHOLIC CITIZEN, Madam,

Review of "Florence Nightingale" in your issue, October 15th.

In the face of so much that is inspiring and

gratifying to women in this life of a splendid pioneer, and of so very much matter of especial interest to Catholic women, it is a shock to find such a particularly unimportant detail, and one quite proportionately small in reference to the whole, selected for reference in the CATHOLIC CITIZEN, as Miss Nightingale's inability to harmonize with Sister nurses, the Irish nuns . . . "But her Rev. Mother from Bermondsey, with her Sisters of Mercy, never failed her."

It is fair that one who knew more than one of Florence Nightingale's Protestant Nurses in the past, should put on record the fact that these ladies spoke of the Nuns from Bermondsey as "mostly Irish and so very human."

Women's co-operation and proven solidarity in hospital work has few exceptions—too few to merit attention, inspired by anti-Irish bias in a feminist journal. I trust you will publish this.

MARY WALL.

In publishing the above letter, we wonder whether Miss Wall has done more than scan Mrs. O'Malley's Life of Florence Nightingale.

In speaking of her admiration of our Catholic religious orders of women: of her training with the Sisters of Charity in Paris: of her love of the Reverend Mother and Sisters from Bermondsey—whatever their nationality—we might well have been accused of unfairness had we not mentioned the fact that she had had trouble with a small band of Irish Sisters. We ask Miss Wall to re-read the passages referred to. There can, of course, be no question of anti-Irish bias in the CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

EDITOR.

### TREASURER'S NOTE.

A report of the Christmas Sale on November 12th and 13th at the Caxton Hall, will be given in our next month's issue.

We are holding a Jumble Sale on Saturday, December 5th, and we shall gladly welcome any old clothes, etc., which should be sent to Mrs. Hand, 10, St. James' Terrace, N.W.8. Please help us to make this Sale as great a success as the last one.

May I beg all members who have not yet sent in their subscriptions to the Alliance and to the "Catholic Citizen," to do so before the end of this month so that we can make up our accounts to the end of the year.

PAULINE M. BRANDT.

| September 30 to October 30.            |       |
|--|-------|
| Anon. . . . .                          | 2 6   |
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| Busse, Miss . . . . .                  | 5 0   |
| Butler-Bowdon, Miss E. . . . .         | 5 0 0 |
| Fedden, Miss . . . . .                 | 7 6   |
| O'Connor, Mrs. H. . . . .              | 2 6   |
| Parker, Mrs. . . . .                   | 2 0 0 |
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### LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

The monthly meeting was held on October 26th in the premises of the Liverpool Union of Girls' Clubs, and in spite of the counter attractions of numerous electioneering meetings there was a very good attendance. Our speaker was Miss Alice Curtayne, author of "St. Catherine of Siena" and other works. She chose as her subject "The Paradox of St. Catherine," and provoked a lively discussion on the ideals of feminism and on the aims of St. Joan's Alliance.

The only woman candidate for Parliament on Merseyside was Miss Eleanor Rathbone (Ind.), to whom we offer our heartiest congratulations on her re-election as Member for the English combined Universities.

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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

**OBJECT.**

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

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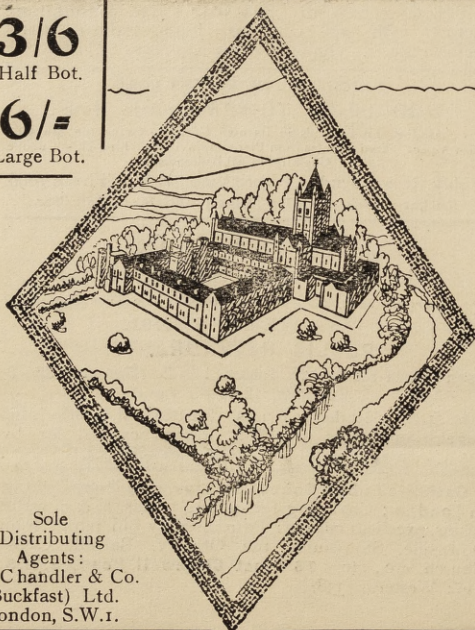
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**Buckfast**  
**TONIC WINE**  
REGISTERED TRADE MARK GUARANTEED