

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Catholic Citizen

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

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15th MAY, 1927.

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.

Traffic in Women and Children.

By L. DE ALBERTI.

[Report of the Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children, League of Nations. Part I. Constable, 2s.

It was in March, 1923, that Miss Grace Abbott, representative of the United States, submitted a memorandum to the Advisory Committee, appointed by the League of Nations to advise the Council on the subject of the traffic in women and children, recommending that a special investigation into the traffic should be undertaken by the League. The American Bureau of Social Hygiene generously offered to provide a sum of seventy-five thousand dollars for the purpose. The offer was accepted, and a Committee of Experts, chosen for their special knowledge, was appointed by the Council in December, 1923.

This Committee, which included two women, Princess Christina Bandini and Dr. Paulina Luisi, issued their report a few weeks ago, and Part I is now available to the public.

It is a remarkable document showing how thoroughly and with what courage the investigation was carried out. For courage must indeed have been required to penetrate into the depths of the underworld, and acquire information from the traffickers themselves. The investigators, who assumed the rôle of traffickers, disguised their real purpose so successfully that they obtained introductions from one gang of traders to another, but in so doing they must certainly have run great danger.

Detailed reports have been drawn up on

twenty-eight countries, in which 112 cities and districts were visited. No fewer than 6,500 persons were interviewed, including about 5,000 persons connected with commercialised prostitution, a large number of whom were either prostitutes or *souteneurs*. The investigators were able to penetrate to the centre of the "so-called ring," and thus traced the ramifications of the vile traffic from country to country.

The Report gives a brief survey of the early history of the international campaign against commercialised Vice and State Regulation, in which Josephine Butler was the pioneer. From the very beginning opponents of State Regulation in England used the argument that it "notoriously promotes national and even international traffic and commerce in prostitutes." That was said in 1877. The Experts of 1927 use practically the same words:

"The existence of licensed houses is undoubtedly an incentive to traffic, both national and international. The fact has been established by previous enquiries, and is admitted to be true by many Governments, as a result of their experience. The enquiries made by us not only confirm this fact, but show, as other observers have remarked, that the licensed house becomes in some countries the centre of all forms of depravity. These establishments constantly require more inmates to replace those who leave and to meet the desires of their clients for change.

"In view of the connection which the Commission has found to exist between licensed houses and traffic in women, the question of the retention or abolition of these houses has acquired an international as well as a national character."

This indictment of State Regulation will be of great value to abolitionists the world over. The Report support the view, frequently put forward, that as a check to disease the system is futile, and calls upon Governments which place reliance in the system, "to examine the question thoroughly in the light of the latest medical knowledge and practice, and to consider the possibility of abandoning a system which is fraught with such dangers from the point of view of international traffic."

In the coldness of official language the Committee are concerned to find so many young girls among the victims of the traffic, and state that the need for special precautions in this respect are obvious, because the increased profit to be obtained is a direct incentive to all kinds of fraud and deception. The subject is closely allied to the question of the age of consent, which in some countries is as low as twelve, and in one or two instances even as low as ten, if it can be shown that the child was not previously chaste. The low age of marriage, it is said, may lead to abuse, since traffickers have recourse to legal marriage in order to evade restrictions.

Let it be remembered that in our own country girls may be married at the age of twelve. That this should be the case in Great Britain, must make progress in less advanced countries more difficult. It is a shameful example.

Profit is at the bottom of the whole ghastly trade, and if the "third party" element could be eliminated, the Commissioners say that the battle would be largely won. Some countries realise this principle, and severely punish all men and women who live on the proceeds of the prostitution of others; but there are many countries where no such action is taken. Governments are urged to review their laws relating to living on the earnings of prostitution, and to strengthen them, if necessary.

The Report records an encouraging change in public opinion on this question of commercialised vice, and states that much of the

responsibility for the traffic is due to past indifference and to ignorance of the tragedies resulting from the traffic and its disgraceful exploitation of victims. A clear knowledge of all that is involved will go far to educate public opinion, and it is for this reason that St. Joan's S.P.A., and other societies of women, ask for the publication of the second part of the Report. We call attention to the fact that the Commissioners themselves came to the conclusion that it was contrary to the public interest, and to their obvious duty, to repress repellent facts, however shocking in their depravity. Let decent men and women understand what the traffic in women actually means, and let men remember that the market is made to meet their demand.

The Enquiry has been mainly concerned with the American Continent, Europe, the Near East, and certain countries on the shores of the Mediterranean. It has scarcely touched a large number of other countries, and in the opinion of the Commissioners it lies with the Council of the League of Nations to consider whether the results achieved are such as to warrant the extension of the enquiry to those other countries.

S. Marylebone Housing Association.

This Association has been formed for purchasing a site in Lisson Grove, improving such houses as are not too bad to be repaired, and rebuilding such houses as are past repair. The intention being to provide better accommodation for working-class people. The site has already been acquired, and the Association is anxious to go ahead. Applications for shares should be made to the Hon. Secretary, 4D, Langford Place, N.W.8.

St. Joan's S.P.A. is co-operating with the Women's Freedom League on May 20th, in the Equal Franchise Meeting, to be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, at 8 o'clock. It is on this day that the Labour Party's Representation of the People Bill comes up for its second reading. It is also the 121st anniversary of the birth of John Stuart Mill, and the alliance is also joining with other feminists in paying honour to this great pioneer of feminism. Miss Barclay Carter will speak on behalf of St. Joan's S.P.A. at the evening meeting. We hope all our readers will attend.

Notes and Comments.

Equal Franchise.

We welcome the Prime Minister's promise to honour his pledge to bring in a Bill next session giving women votes at 21, and on the same terms as men, but wish, however, that he had promised it this session, for even he recognises the possibility of "the new voters being unable to vote at the next general election in the event of an unexpected catastrophe bringing the life of the present parliament to an end."

To avoid such a risk we would urge the Government to adopt the Labour Party Representation of the People Bill, 1927, to be introduced on May 20, so that the women concerned may be placed on the register without delay.

The campaign must be carried on, the Prime Minister must feel that women's organisations are behind him, eagerly waiting to see the Bill materialise, and carried into law, before any "catastrophe" prevents it. The opposition has been showing its strength, and the measure may even yet be endangered through the apathy of supporters.

We ask each individual member to do her part by letting her M.P. know at once that she is relying on his support for this measure. The most effective way is to go in person and interview her Member in the House of Commons. Those who are unable to go, must not fail to write to their M.P.'s immediately.

The Bill will affect some two million women over thirty besides the women under thirty.

Mr. Harney, K.C., will introduce in May under the ten minutes' rule, a Bill to amend the Lead Paint (Protection Against Poisoning) Bill, 1926, by the deletion of the sections relating to the exclusion of women. The Bill will have the support of many societies, including St. Joan's S.P.A. Mr. Harney will press for the need of a Home Office enquiry into the relative susceptibility of men and women to lead poisoning.

The Nursing Homes (Registration Bill) introduced by Mrs. Hilton Philipson was given a second reading, and committed to a Standing Committee.

* * * * *
Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, Hon. Secretary of the Liverpool branch, who spoke on a recent Equal Franchise deputation to the Prime Minister, has been made President of the Liverpool branch of the Dickens Fellowship, the first woman to hold office in its 25 years' existence.

* * * * *
St. Joan's S.P.A. has affiliated to the International Centre at Bierville. The VI Democratic Congress for Peace was held there last year, and was a great success. It is now proposed to turn the Château of Bierville into a permanent centre for international friendship. Our members will have the right of staying in these beautiful surroundings on payment of only one franc subscription.

* * * * *
We congratulate our colleague, Mrs. Leigh, J.P., who topped the poll at the Knightsford Council election. Mrs. Leigh is a Catholic, and a constant subscriber to the Catholic Citizen.

* * * * *
St. Joan's S.P.A. was represented at the Solemn Requiem Mass offered at Westminster Cathedral for the late Miss Annie Baker. Miss Baker was a pioneer in the fight for the suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, and an assessor on the Advisory Committee on the Traffic, of the League of Nations.

* * * * *
Mrs. John Scott, of Montreal, sent congratulations to ourselves, and all the good suffragists of Britain, in the name of our less fortunate sisters in the Province. Mrs. Scott kindly says that the Catholic Citizen is a great help to her, and she would not be without it for anything. Mrs. Scott also sends us a speech made by Mrs. Sampson, a Catholic, President of the Montreal Women's Club, before the Premier of Quebec, the Hon. L. A. Taschereau, and his Cabinet. We hope to publish this later on.

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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Saint Joan.

Miss Joan Evans has translated this fifteenth century French mystery play* about her patroness and ours with scholarship and unusual literary skill. Her work would be good to read even if it had another subject. Conversely, its matter is such that it would be deeply interesting even if its dress were unfitting. The original French text was written only a few years after the saint's death, and immediately acted in Orleans, the city she had saved, to men and women who had seen her and heard her speak, who must have known her well from their experience and first-hand evidence.

The Joan of this play is therefore the prototype of her who was enshrined in the imaginations of the French people. She differs slightly from the real Joan of the *Procès*. A woman translated into a liturgical play is necessarily a little conventionalized, like a portrait in a stained glass window. But this portrait is of a living girl. "She is a maid of mark, passing virtuous, prudent and wise, nor have we found aught in her but all good and pleasant speech; and goodwill and high heart to will the fulfilment of this matter." These words call up the true Joan.

Some incidents in the play will remind members of our alliance why they chose this saint for their protector. It seemed doubtful, early in her career, whether she would obtain the audience with the king ne-

cessary to her plans. But finally his councillors advised him to grant it to her. "Ye would hearken to a windmill clattering, or to a juggler by the wayside; ye may not make denial when it is for naught but a girl." An obstacle to the acknowledgment of her mission by many good French people, as well as a taunt often flung at her by the English, was the circumstance that she had left her home in order to do public work. This reproach, several times repeated by characters in the play, is answered only by the play itself. To the reproach, equally weighted with contemporary public opinion, that she wore men's clothes, St. Joan herself makes the matter-of-fact answer: "the array of a man is more knowledgeable than that of a woman for the work."

In one of the opening scenes, when St. Michael appears to the young shepherd girl, guarding her father's "poor beasts in the fields at grass," who drops her needlework in awe, there is a semi-rhythmical dialogue. "God be with you, Joan, true maid, whom He loveth well; have ever steadfast heart to be the shepherd girl of God," St. Michael says. Surely our saint has never been more beautifully invoked.

H.D.I.

* SAINT JOAN OF ORLEANS, scenes from the fifteenth century *Mystère du Siège d'Orléans*, translated and selected by Joan Evans, B. Litt. (Clarendon Press, 7s. 6d. net).

Reviews.

The current issue of the *Shield* contains amongst other interesting articles, the report of Professor von Düring's address to the Annual Meeting of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, entitled: "The Changing Outlook on the Continent." Professor von Düring comes to the definite conclusion: that regulation of prostitution will soon be given up on the Continent, as absurd. Speaking of his own conversion to the doctrine of free treatment he says: "The really astounding spontaneity with which the population of Asia Minor (I gained my experience there by six years' practical work) finally came for treatment after I instituted liberty for compulsion, proves that liberty is far more effective than compulsion."

This is followed by an article entitled: "Towards Complete Abolition in Belgium," being a translation of a speech by Burgomaster Max to the Communal Council of Brussels.

The *Inter-University Magazine* (price 1s.) which is the Organ of the University Catholic Societies' Federation, will be published twice a year for the future. Father C. C. Martindale, S.J., is Honorary Editor. The current issue, amongst other interesting articles, has an article on the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries. The Society has grown out of the work of the late Dr. Agnes McLaren, who had a great enthusiasm for medical missions, and was responsible for the founding of a hospital for women and children in Rawal Pindi, Punjab. Dr. McLaren, we are proud to remember, was one of the earliest members of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society—now St. Joan's S.P.A. Anyone interested in the Catholic Medical Missionaries is asked to apply to Miss Pauline Willis, 24, Holland Street, W.8. The Magazine can be obtained from Messrs. Burns and Oates.

Married Women's Right to Work.

Sir Robert Newman's Bill to prevent a woman being dismissed from work on marriage, or to be refused employment, because she is married, was rejected by 86 votes to 63. Lady Astor spoke warmly in support of the Bill. Mr. McNeill spoke against the Bill in the name of the Government; the Bill would effect a change of far-reaching

importance in the administration, not only of all the Departments of the Central Government of the State, but of all the local authorities. Whether the change was desirable, or undesirable, it ought to be made only on the initiative of the Government of the day. But has the Government any intention of taking it up? We regret the defeat of the Bill.

Mr. Sexton and Major Malone voted for the Bill, the latter voting against his party. Major Hennessy, Captain A. Hope, and Sir Gerald Strickland, voted against the Bill. The other Catholic M.P's. were absent.

Suffragists in South Africa.

Women in South Africa are turning their indignation at the Government's treatment of their Bill into deeds. Their Quarterly Paper has adopted a new title, "The Flashlight," and shows a spirit, which must lead to victory. Protest meetings are being held, and there is every sign that suffragists intend to make their anger felt. At a large meeting in Cape Town, a resolution was passed that women should pledge themselves to abstain from all party political work, unless some measure of franchise were granted during the session of 1928.

Our member, Miss Dorman, has a telling article in "Catholic News" (South Africa): "Do Women Need the Vote?"

It is good to read in *Stri-Dharma* of the splendid success of the great All-India Women's Conference held at Poona in January, at which the Maharanee of Baroda presided and put before the conference a very wide programme of social and educational reform. All the different States and Provinces of India sent women delegates and various resolutions were passed dealing with girls' education in all its aspects, and another fixing the age of consent for girls at sixteen.

One of the most successful Trade Unions in India, where labour organisation is very backward, is the Textile Labour Union of Ahmadabad, and women may be proud of the fact that its President is a woman, Srimati Anasuya Sarabai, sister of a great mill-owner of the same city. The Union carries out a splendid programme of Welfare work and runs a number of day and evening schools, libraries and dispensaries.

International Notes.

News from Latin Countries.

The *Bolletino dell'Unione Femminile Catolica Italiano* (Rome) announces that in Italy a "contrary wind" has blown against the "boat proudly launched" by the Sacchi Decree-Law of 17th July, 1919, which gave legal validity to the acts of married women, independently of their husbands' sanction, allowed them to be guardians of their children, and also admitted them to all professions, and to all public employments, except those which implied public jurisdictional powers or the exercise of political rights or powers, or which touched the military defence of the state.

On 11th February, 1920, a list published in the *Gazetta Ufficiale* revealed the scope of the exclusion involved. A woman, it appeared, was not to be director general of ministry, to hold any great office of state, to be a prefect, a minister plenipotenciary, a consul general, the General Director of Railways, or the General Commissioner of Emigration. She was not to be a member of the Council of State or the magistrature, to hold any employment of a judiciary order, to belong to the service of the Public Security, the Guardianship of Prisons, the Ministry of the Colonies, the Inspectorate of Emigrations, the Royal Guards of Finances or the Forests, or to be director general of the National Insurance Institute or of certain State-aided banks.

Even moderate feminists protested against the disqualification of women for the office of inspector of emigration, for it is widely held in Italy that when whole families, widows and single women emigrate, as they often do, they ought to have the benefit of a woman inspector.

Since the exclusions were all based on the Sacchi law, and therefore affected only posts which could be considered to imply jurisdictional powers or political powers or rights, or to be connected with the national defence, they did not extend to any educational posts. Women were left competent to hold even the high office of *Provveditor*

agli Studi since it implies not jurisdiction but only administrative powers.

It is this reserve which is now threatened by a decree disqualifying women for the competitions for the chairs of literature and philosophy in the higher middle schools. Public educational posts in Italy are almost invariably awarded on the results of a competitive examination, and feminists are alarmed lest the new regulation be the thin end of the wedge.

The *Acción Católica de la Mujer* (Madrid) announces that the Telegraphists' Section of the association after which this paper is named has obtained a rise in pay for 130 third-class assistant telegraphists, all women, who have completed twelve years of service. The section hopes to secure the extension of the rise to 300 women to whom it has not yet reached. The telegraphists were the first women in Spain to enter the service of the State.

La Nacion (Buenos Aires) reports that the Convention for the Reform of the Constitution of the Province of San Juan in Argentina passed on 9th February a resolution granting the vote in this province to women. This is the first time women have received voting rights in South America.

All the Press of Latin America has recorded the part which women have taken in the civil war in Nicaragua. When in February the Conservatives retook the town of Chinendega they were helped by a women's battalion, captained by Natalia García, a girl of twenty. The women's work was mainly the transport of munitions and food, and the cleaning of rifles. One woman was killed on the battlefield, three were mortally wounded, and nine others wounded less seriously. Natalia García herself was gravely wounded on the left side.

Don Augusto Raminez, in an article in *El Mercurio* (Santiago-de-Chile) suggests the following measures for combating the high rate of infant mortality in Chile, a country in which a religious marriage is not legal until it is completed by a civil ceremony:—

(1) The legalization, by means of simple registration only, of all the existing irregular marriages, and the legitimization of all children born of such unions; (2) the com-

pulsory registration in the civil register of all births, together with the registration of the infant's father and mother; (3) a preference to be given in all public employments to married persons, whether men or women; (4) additional pay to be given to an employee for each of his or her living children; (5) all children, legitimate or otherwise, to have the right to inherit, the children not being responsible for their parents' sin; (6) severe penalties to be imposed for concubinage.

Vida Femenina (Barcelona) prints a notice which shows that the government of Mexico adds to its other shortcomings a contempt of the open-door policy. The Mexican Health Code of 1927 prohibits over-time, night-work, and work in unhealthy industries to children under sixteen years of age and to women of all ages. In a country like Mexico, the effect of such a law is that women are excluded, as it prescribes, when the work in question is remunerative or pleasant or when there is unemployment, and that its prescriptions are disregarded when the work is ill-paid or very disagreeable, or when there is a shortage of labour.

H.I.D.

Equal Political Rights Campaign.

St. Joan's Alliance has held meetings on Equal Franchise at the White Stone Pond, Hampstead Heath. The next will be held on Sunday, May 15, at 3-30, and on alternate Sundays throughout the summer. The League of the Church Militant will be responsible for meetings there on Saturday, May 7, and on alternate Saturdays after that date.

Offers for speakers for St. Joan's meetings will be gratefully received at the Office, and all members and readers are asked to attend the meetings whenever possible.

Lobbying of M.P's. is also being undertaken, and it is hoped to extend this important work. Members willing to lobby their M.P's. are asked to send in their names to the Secretary, who will organise lobbying parties.

An Equal Franchise meeting, organised by the N.U.W.T., will be held in the Lower Town Hall, Battersea, on Tuesday, May 10, at 8 p.m., when Miss Barclay Carter will speak on behalf of St. Joan's Alliance for the women under thirty.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

Hon. Secretary: Miss N. S. Parnell, B.A., 45 Falkner Street, Liverpool.

So far it has not been possible to arrange deputations to M.P.s, partly owing to the Easter vacation and partly to the Conservative members' preoccupation with their party affairs in Liverpool. The Hon. Secretary represented the Branch at an important meeting on laws dealing with sexual offences, organised by the Central Group of the Women Citizen's Association at which Mrs. Rackham presided, and the speakers included the Recorder of Liverpool, Dr. Hadfield and Canon Raven. The Branch is looking forward to hearing Mrs. Crawford at the end of May.

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* *Catholic Citizen*.

The American Tea arranged by the Finance Sub-Committee, in aid of the *Catholic Citizen*, was not as well attended as our gallant little paper deserves. Those twenty-two members and friends, however, who did turn up, must have felt well rewarded in spending an enjoyable and useful afternoon. A few who were unable to come, sent donations instead. We are much indebted to Captain Martin for being able to hold the event in such pleasant surroundings as the 1920 Club; to Miss Wall for her character delineations, which always add so greatly to the entertainment; to "Omicron" for sending beautiful flowers, and to all who brought and bought useful gifts. Including cash donations, the Tea realised £6 9s. 3d. Unfortunately the debt on the paper still stands at about £15, as the expense of publishing goes on month by month.

G. JEFFERY.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

NON-PARTY.

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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.

MEMBERSHIP.

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ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE.

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ON

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(White Stone Pond).

SUNDAYS AT 3-30.

May 15th and 29th.

June 12th and 26th.

ALL READERS ARE ASKED TO ATTEND.

ST. MARYLEBONE

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(PUBLIC UTILITY SOCIETY).

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