

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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

VOL. IX., No. 7.

July 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.

## OURSELVES AND OUR WORK.

BY ISABEL WILLIS.

At a recent Catholic Suffrage meeting one of the speakers made a very striking and a very true remark. She said that, as in the Church, we have the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, so surely we should have Political Works of Mercy too. These words might almost be adopted as the motto of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society at the present day, when the term "politics" covers such an enormous ground and, as we know, the voting power of Catholic women can affect for good or evil much of the life of the Church. Now that this voting power is no longer confined to men, Catholic women are constantly being shown by the ecclesiastical authorities how essential it is that they should lose no opportunity of studying political questions, so that they may understand how best to use their voting power whenever an election occurs. Is it not then a proof of wisdom on the part of the women who founded the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society twelve years ago, that they should have not only realised the importance of the vote to women in general, but that they should have had the idea of a *Catholic* women's society, which should make the attainment of the Suffrage its main object. Other Catholic Societies existed to carry out many good objects—Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy were all well provided for—but none of them could be said to have devoted even a portion of their energies to endeavouring by active suffrage work to raise the status of women, and thereby to open to them fresh fields of use-

fulness, in their two-fold position as Catholics and Citizens.

In another way the C.W.S.S. can claim to have been, by means of its political work, of real assistance to the cause of religion. This is by our having worked for the Suffrage side by side with non-Catholic Suffrage Societies, thus proving that our interests can be as wide as those of other good citizens.

Now that the vote has been won, the activities of our Society, far from having come to an end, have found a wider scope than before, since we now keep in touch with, and help in their difficulties, the many Catholic suffragists abroad, and this work is constantly increasing. By exchange of papers and by correspondence we are in touch with Catholic feminists in France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, as well as some of the newly-formed States. Belgium has two monthly feminist papers—"La Femme Belge" and "Le Féminisme Chrétien"—both of which are sent to us regularly, and from the latter we can learn much of the activities of Belgian Catholic women, and of how they are claiming the vote, as we ourselves have always done, in the interests of religion, justice and morality.

In one of our English Catholic papers there was recently some remarks with which we as suffragists can hardly be expected entirely to agree. The writer seems to think that, to use his own words, "women are wheedled, in the high name of the grandest humanitarian ideals, to support doctrinaires whose



prescription for the maladies of Society is to inscribe reams of new laws on the Statute Book." He adds that his object in making these remarks is to stir up Catholic women who will not only defend the Church in such matters as Education, but will turn out to be the best friends of the people. To be "the best friends of the people" is the aim already of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society—meaning by "the people" the whole of the people, women as well as men. We need no stirring up for this object; but experience has shown us that new laws are sometimes very urgently required in the interests of women before age-long injustices can be set right. To get these new laws we need the help of non-Catholics, and are glad to be able to work with them when our aim is the same; so that no "wheedling" is needed, as the writer seems to fear is the case. Men have all along been careful to guard their own rights and privileges, and had they been equally careful that women should also have just treatment, we should not now, in the twentieth century, have to seek for new laws to secure it. We have not even yet got the Suffrage on the same terms as it is granted to men, so there will have to be a new law inscribed on the Statute Book before we can obtain that elementary piece of justice.

### International Notes.

Melle Van den Plas in giving (in the *familial* which, our readers will remember, pressions of the recent congress in Paris of the Action Sociale de la Femme, after paying a graceful compliment to Miss FitzGerald, devotes a few vivid lines to one of the most striking personalities in the French feminist world. We refer to that venerable Catholic suffragist, Melle Maugeret, who, though close on 80 years of age, has lost little of her eloquence and fervour, and who made an eloquent appeal to all Catholic women to join in the Suffrage movement.

Melle Van den Plas fears that the *vote familial* which, our readers will remember, would bestow on the married man an extra vote for every child his wife bears him, is still being taken seriously both in France and

Belgium, and that a measure on those lines may follow the adoption of Woman Suffrage. She points out the utter absurdity of a scheme by which the proportionate value of a woman's vote would be diminished by every fresh child she brought into the world! And this in the interests of larger families.

Women short-hand writers, it seems, have suggested that they might be allowed to compete with their male colleagues for the much-coveted posts of short-hand clerks in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. At once Frenchmen are aghast at the suggestion. Think, they say, what a cause of distraction to our legislators! "La Française" is rightly severe on this absurd and antiquated view.

"Le Travail Féminin," of Geneva, points out in forcible terms to its readers (June) that in the plebiscite about to be held throughout Switzerland on the Drink question, one in which the interests of the home are so vitally concerned, women are unable to record a vote. In this regrettable position it urges all its readers to do what they can for the cause of temperance by peaceful persuasion and by prayer.

Echoes of the Rome Congress are to be found in various feminist periodicals. The "Bollettino" of the Italian Catholic Women's Union which, of course, like ourselves, did not officially participate, is sympathetic to the vote but clearly nervous as to the effect of the Anglo-Saxon mentality on the whole question of women's civil and economic position, and more especially of the married woman.

We read in "Women's Social Work" that one of the features of the recent Annual Conference of the Catholic Women's Social Guild in Melbourne was a paper by Miss Fawcett on the urgent need in Australia of Catholic reference and lending libraries. She referred enthusiastically to the splendid results achieved by the Bexhill Library, and described also the new Catholic Library in Dublin.

V.M.C.

### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The C.W.S.S. has sent up the following resolution, passed at a meeting of the Executive Committee, to the Ministry of Labour:—"That this meeting condemns the Trade Boards Bill as a reactionary measure calculated to increase the possibilities of underpayment by limiting the number of Trade Boards and crippling the powers of those in existence."

The Legitimacy Bill passed its report stage and third reading on June 15th. The following clause, dropped in Committee, was reinserted:—"Nothing in this Act shall operate to legitimate a person whose father or mother was married to a third party when the illegitimate person was born." Without this clause the Bill becomes controversial, and would probably not reach the Statute Book.

The Bastardy Bill passed its report stage and third reading on the same day. The Bill increases the maximum payment under Affiliation Orders to twenty shillings, and gives the Court power to vary an affiliation order. Unfortunately an amendment, introduced at the instance of the N.U.S.E.C., which provided that the "Court may direct that the imprisonment for the non-compliance with the order shall not extinguish the debt," was dropped on account of administrative difficulties. It is, however, hoped that a way out of the difficulty will be found.

The Matrimonial Causes Bill, which enables a woman to divorce her husband for adultery, thus making the law equal as between man and wife, passed its third reading in the House of Commons by 257 to 26.

The "Woman's Leader" points out that in Scotland where divorce is on equal terms, so far from the number of divorces being increased, the rate of divorce is lower than in England, and that it would seem that the law has had the result of reducing the number of unhappy marriages due to the husband's infidelity.

Mrs. Hilton Philipson, M.P., took her seat in the House of Commons, sponsored by Colonel Leslie Wilson (Chief Conservative Whip) and Sir Thomas Inskip (Solicitor General). Mrs. Philipson's triumph proves that there is no real prejudice against women candidates, it is a question mainly of giving

the women candidates good seats. So far the parties have been shy of doing so. Mrs. Philipson's success has pushed open the door a little wider for other women to follow her.

We are indebted to the *Tablot* for the following information:—"In his recent visit to Vittorio Veneto, Signor Mussolini conferred the Golden Medal, which is the highest honour available, upon Sister Pasqua, of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Verona, in recognition of her wonderful services in the civil and military hospital, in the provincial lunatic asylum, and in the hospice. The imposing ceremony took place in the open Piazza of the town, before a large assembly of the people. The Sister had merited the distinguished honour, for she had proved herself a heroine of charity and a marvel of industrious service, especially after the catastrophe of Caporetto. In the midst of the disastrous flight of the population, the Sisters alone remained at their post, and the whole community are deserving of praise for their heroic activities." In the dearth of medical men the sister performed prodigies of surgical work.

Four more women have been called to the Bar, and Miss Gladys Gregory and Miss Dorothy Davis have the distinction of being the first women to become qualified actuaries and members of the Institute of Actuaries of Staple Inn. It is only three years since membership was open to women.

On behalf of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, Mrs. V. M. Crawford last week gave evidence before the Joint Select Committee of Lords and Commons now sitting at the House of Lords on the Guardianship, Maintenance and Custody of Infants Bill. Her evidence, which was in favour of the bill, dealt with the unhappy position of wives and mothers under the Poor Law, more especially the deserted wife, and urged the need of legislation on their behalf.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Miss Kathleen and Miss Eleanor FitzGerald on the death of their mother, for whom we ask the prayers of our readers. R.I.P.

We also ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of our associate, the Reverend Father Price, O.S.M. R.I.P.



## 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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## BLESSED ANNA MARIA TAIGI,

How often do we hear the complaint—for I can think of no better word—that there are canonised widows and virgins, but no canonised wives. Many married women must, of course, attain to sanctity, but how comes it that their sanctity remains undiscovered?

Blessed Anna Maria Taigi holds the unique position of the only discovered married woman saint, that is to say whose sanctity was known and who died in the holy state of matrimony.

She is almost contemporary, too, with this material age, dying in 1837, at the age of sixty-eight.

She is one of those saints who should make a special appeal to us poor human beings, for outwardly she lived what one may call an ordinary life. A pretty girl, married at the age of twenty, fond of amusement and finery like most young girls, after a year of married life she gave up, with her husband's consent, both finery and amusement, and started on her journey in search of spiritual perfection. But she did not wander from home in search of it. As I have said, she lived an ordinary life of a woman of her class. A life of domestic toil amidst the cares of rearing a large family—a devoted wife, an excellent mother. Ordinary, and yet how extraordinary. For the poor working woman toiling with her hands, cooking the family meals, yet lived in close communion with God, and for forty-seven years had before her eyes the vision of a mysterious sun or disc, in which she could foresee future events, affecting the welfare of humanity.

The fame of her sanctity spread abroad, though her husband seems not to have discovered it. Others were in no doubt as to her sanctity, and this woman of low station, who lived and died in poverty, was sought out by prelates, diplomats, and royal personages, who came to seek advice on matters of State. People of high and low degree flocked to her, to ask her prayers, to seek spiritual comfort, to consult her in their troubles, to see and converse with a saint.

It is reported that an ambassador said of her: "She has hold of the world, as I hold my snuff-box."

All those who came to her went away marvelling, with never a doubt that they had been in the presence of a saint.

In her husband's estimation she was an excellent wife, who never neglected his comfort. He gave evidence when the cause of her canonization was introduced. He was unaware of her ecstasies, he said, but noticed she was sometimes drowsy or dazed. "Sometimes on coming home to change my clothes," he said, "I would find the house full of strangers, who had come to ask Anna for prayers or counsel—princes, prelates, noble ladies, persons of every class—and she would instantly leave every one to wait on me, and evidently with all her heart, even to arranging my shoe strings. . . ."

And so this woman went through life combining the highest perfection with the simplest tasks, an undying proof that even the trials and cares of matrimony and the upbringing of children need not interrupt the inner life of communion with God. L. DE ALBERTI.

## Reviews.

ECONOMICS FOR CHRISTIANS. By Joseph Clayton. (Blackwell).

We have been told that the student of economics must avoid the assumption that the economic conditions of our own time and country are, and must be, normal for all other times and countries. Mr. Clayton in this most interesting and provocative book reminds us that the capitalist system "is but a thing of a few hundred years' growth; begotten in the break-up of European society at the Reformation; born in the pride that condemned as foolishness authority claiming inspired supremacy on earth; nourished on the ethics and philosophy of Protestant individualism; achieving its full stature in the hideous, heedless sacrifice of child life in cotton factories at home, and the exploitation of countless aboriginal tribes in the dark corners of the earth—such a system as this of capitalism not only cannot endure permanently (which of us would desire that it should?), it is already far spent, destroying its own functions by its monstrous bulk. . . ."

From this passage our readers will see that Mr. Clayton is in fighting form, and indeed he is a formidable opponent. He turns with disgust from a system which he considers has brought evil on humanity—demands a system of co-operative labour for house building, agriculture, and the provision of fuel, food and raiment for all. He tells us roundly that if civilisation and liberty are not to be toppled into the abyss co-operation must supersede capitalism, and production be directed to satisfying common needs.

In their original form the essays appeared in "Blackfriars" and the "New Witness" and in "The Servant Problem" our readers will recognise a delightful article which appeared in our own columns. Even those who disagree with Mr. Clayton cannot fail to be interested in this volume of essays.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM. (Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations, 5, York Buildings, Adelphi. 1/3 post free, One doz. 10/6 post free).

This pamphlet, prepared by the Housing Sub-Committee of the Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations, will be a

valuable help to any person honestly anxious to understand the Housing Problem Question, and who, without this assistance, might flounder about helplessly in the many complexities of the problem. It does not really help matters to abuse blindly the authorities who are grappling with a difficult task, but intelligent criticism is often helpful.

This lucid sketch shows how houses were provided in the past, deals with the difficulties of the present position, and alternative methods of remedial action. The pamphlet should have a wide circulation.

## Professional and Business Women's Hospital League.

This League, which we are glad to note from its Annual Report is making good headway, provides free hospital treatment for its members in a paying ward. The subscription is 5/- a year only, and any woman earning her own living, and unable to afford the expense of a nursing home, is eligible for membership. Arrangements have been made by the Committee for the members of the League to consult a Gynaecologist at the Hospital for Women, Soho Square, where treatment or subsequent operation can be undertaken under the auspices of the League. Arrangements have been made with a firm of surgical instrument makers to allow a substantial reduction of price to members of the League. A number of Catholics have joined the League, and a great number of cases go to St. Andrew's Hospital, Dollis Hill. The address of the League is 197, Edgware Road, W.2.

## NO MORE WAR AND UNIVERSAL DISARMAMENT DEMONSTRATION

28th and 29th July.

(In connection with demonstrations to be held simultaneously all over the world.)

The object of this Demonstration is to demand that the Government shall make a definite proposal for immediate disarmament by land, sea and air, by mutual agreement. Will members and friends please note that the C.W.S.S. contingent will form up on the Embankment (Charing Cross End), 2-30 p.m. on Saturday, July 28th. The procession will proceed to Hyde Park.



### Social Duties.

One wonders that Sinn Fein was not more popular with the average Catholic English-woman, for the words, if we use them in the translation which the Journalists gave us, mean "Ourselves Alone." It is true that this was not the sense in which the late Arthur Griffiths, R.I.P., intended them to be used, but then most people get their information from the newspapers.

"Ourselves Alone," one might say almost that Catholic Englishwomen used it as their watchword. How often have Social Workers, for instance, come up against it. "I'll willingly give you a subscription for your girls' club, but I am afraid I can't give you personal help. I find all my time taken up already with my social duties, my family, and, of course, my prayers." And one's duties to one's neighbour? Social duties in the real sense of the word. Without claiming to be a theologian, it does seem sometimes that a lot of women would be better Catholics if they said fewer prayers and gave more thought to the Corporal works of Mercy. I imagine that that's why some good and holy people are so difficult to live with, they are so taken up with their duty to themselves that they have no time to give thought to their neighbour.

And, of course, social work isn't really pleasant; at first, at any rate. One is more comfortable in one's own drawing-room than in a Baby Club, dark and depressing as they often are, listening to the sorrows of the mothers, and hearing how Mrs. Smith's man hasn't had any work for six months, and how she's that worried that she doesn't know where to turn. But, to some, it's still more unpleasant, still more depressing to hear of babies dying when their deaths can be prevented, and so we have to turn round and see what we can do to prevent them.

Yes, it is all unpleasant and trying at first (you will get to like it, perhaps love it, after a time), but if our Church teaches us anything, it's our duty to our neighbour, and we don't do our whole duty by giving money to a beggar in the street, nor even by subscribing generously to the most excellent organisations.

Of course, English Catholic women aren't the only ones to deserve blame, I can't speak

for the continent, but Irish women are just as bad, every bit. There are, to be sure, notable exceptions in both countries, but the same women oughtn't to be expected to do everything all the time. I suppose there is not a Catholic organisation in either country that doesn't need more helpers, not to speak of the non-sectarian organisations where Catholic women can do a twofold work.

And the worst of it is that in writing for the "Catholic Citizen" I can't help feeling that I am preaching to the already converted.  
A.C.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ALLIANCE.

From the

"International Women's Suffrage News."

The necessity for a presidential election at Rome must have caused most of us a real pang, as we realized the Alliance was entering on a new epoch of work.

With the usual brilliance of women we have turned the crisis to account and have now two presidents, one our founder and honorary president, who will continue to embody for us all the glamour and romance of our early work as pioneers. It was a period of desperately hard struggles and of tiny bands of remarkable women in all countries, and in many an astounding development of women's organization which has proved in itself a remarkable education, and of thrilling successes which have enfranchised the women of twenty-five countries. Success has been as wayward, according to our critics, as *la donna e mobile*. For success came sometimes in the night, with war and revolution, sometimes, long wooed, it only followed painstaking and self-sacrificing organization which penetrated, if not every home, at least every street and every hamlet. All this we cherish and remember in Mrs. Chapman Catt.

What of your new work-a-day President? She must stand, I think, for the sober middle-age of the Alliance. We are out of the romantic pioneer stage and must set to work to occupy and settle and develop the new lands we have won. Not that our middle age will be dull, far from it. We welcome to-day the gain of the municipal suffrage and eligibility of the Italian women as the foretaste of

our elation when we shall hear that the first Latin country has completely enfranchised its women.

With a new President the responsibility on each member of the Board, on each National President, and on each individual is greater. True, in one sense, our task is easier because we have now in the world a permanent international authority, the League of Nations, whom we can help and who in turn can assist us. First, we are to stand for peace, and peace must rest on understanding, and common work for a single aim gives us this understanding. Secondly, the machinery of the League enables us to work simultaneously in all countries, for instance, work on the nationality of married women is much simplified. To get such a change through many legislatures piece-meal would cause suffering and confusion, leaving many women without nationality, but a draft convention, approved by the Assembly of the League, can be ratified quickly by individual Governments. Slavery and child marriage can be fought everywhere at once, and drugs and traffic in women can only be tackled efficiently on an international scale.

My message to the unenfranchised women is: "Concentrate on the vote. Take part in other work, social, educational, civic, seize every opportunity to prove that women are capable and public-spirited, but do all this other work as a means to getting the vote, realizing that until women are full citizens much of their work is wasted in trying to cure the victims of evil instead of attacking its root."

To the enfranchised women I would say: "We fought for and won the vote that we might be full and equal citizens of our countries, and we should therefore join with men in concerted action on all great national problems, but we must never forget that much of our strength will be wasted if we merely double men's efforts; we must for some time remember we are also specialists and experts with special work to do, and our work as humans must not be at the sacrifice of our work as women. As long as there is any discrimination against women in our civil codes, as long as in theory or practice (even 'health' practice) there is inequality, as long as a double standard of morality exists or any

industrial disabilities we must consider their removal our special charge."

MARGERIE I. CORBETT ASHBY.

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Brady, Miss	1	0	0
Brandt, Miss	0	4	2
Butler Bowdon, Miss	1	3	6
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£28 13 5

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### Hon. Treasurer's Note.

In last month's paper I appealed for the June quarter's rent. Thanks to the above subscribers we are now able to meet this and other office expenses to date. The expenses, however, must go on during the next two months, when there can be no meetings in town to provide funds for them. As recent expenses have been met largely in this way, I appeal specially to country members and those abroad to help us through the summer months.

We regret that the names of Mrs. Clayton and Dr. Mary Cardwell were omitted from the list of donors to the "Catholic Citizen" Stall published last month. G. JEFFERY.



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The Monthly Organ of

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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.

**METHODS.**

1. Strictly non-party.
2. Active propaganda by political and educational means.

**MEMBERSHIP.**

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.