

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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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. XIII, No. 10.

15th NOVEMBER, 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.

The Future of Nursing.

By NANCY STEWART PARNELL, B.A.

In the course of an unconventional appeal for a hospital for women, Miss Sybil Thorn-dike once suggested that the health of those who tend others is apt to be neglected by a thoughtless world. She was thinking chiefly of mothers but her words apply equally to nurses. For many decades now these gallant women have cheerfully sacrificed their health, comfort and happiness in the supposed interests of their patients and it is only comparatively recently that people have troubled to ask themselves whether the conditions under which nurses worked were either necessary or fair. Partly as a result of the war and partly because of increased opportunities for women the whole nursing system of this country has been subjected to a severe scrutiny revealing many grave defects.

A heavy responsibility rests with the public in this matter, for not only are the vast majority of nurses trained and employed by public bodies, but also by the Registration Act of 1919, Parliament itself laid down onerous conditions for young nurses desiring official recognition of their status. It is obvious also that a dearth of nurses such as is threatened to-day is a menace to the health of the nation and it has to be borne in mind that the necessary reforms will have to be carried out on national lines if they are to be effective in ridding the nursing

system of the chaos which is so marked a feature of it at present. To feminists in particular the state of the nursing profession should be a matter of grave concern because it involves the health and happiness of thousands of women in what is pre-eminently a woman's profession. Also, it is nothing short of a tragedy that nursing which offers an ever-growing field of useful training and noble service should have so evil a reputation that few girls will be found to enter it even in a time of difficulty and unemployment, lastly, one hopes that Catholics will bestir themselves about a profession which gives so few facilities for the practices of religion as nursing, where perhaps more than in any other a girl needs every possible safeguard. Mass once a fortnight, and even that begrudged and lightly abrogated, is common, or else attendance is purchased by the sacrifice of a nurse's only off-duty time and perhaps of her breakfast.

Fortunately, authorities here and there are alive to the situation. For example, at the Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition held in April a whole session was devoted to the problem of "the shortage of nurses" and all the speakers, including the general secretary of the Poor Law Officer's Union, were unanimous in their criticisms of nursing as a career for girls. The Labour Party actually instituted an enquiry into conditions and held a

meeting of nursing and kindred organisations last January to hear the results of its investigations. The draft report presented on that occasion may now be procured and is an invaluable document for those interested in the subject, especially as it has in the main the goodwill of the cautious and rather conservative International Council of Nurses, and also the "The Nursing Mirror." The need for reform is even troubling so important a person in the matter as the Minister of Health who, according to his own confession at the last annual meeting of the College of Nursing, is making a practice of attending nursing functions because he feels that the profession is at a crisis in its history. But though a considerable amount of attention has been given to the state of nursing the necessary reforms are going to be neither easy nor speedy nor cheap to bring about and public opinion will have to be much better informed and more alert than it is at present if the system is to be radically changed.

Most people now realise that the hours worked by nurses in hospitals and nursing homes are far too long and the pay far too low but it is a mistake to think that the need for reform ends there. The provision of suitable accommodation, longer holidays with full pay, better treatment during illness are also vital matters, while perhaps the crying need of the moment for fully-trained nurses is for a superannuation scheme by which all nurses may retire at a reasonable age. Nurses under Poor Law benefit by the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Acts of 1864 and 1897 and there are small voluntary schemes but the majority of nurses are without prospects in their old age since there is no pension for them and their meagre salaries make saving impossible. A change in the uniform is another reform long overdue; for when doctors unanimously state the advantages of low necks, loose clothing and thin stockings it seems incredible that nurses should be condemned to wear the reverse. Nurses acting as health or tuberculosis visitors, welfare workers, school nurses etc., justly complain of their unfair conditions of employment and remuneration for there seems no principle at work. For instance, to quote from the Labour Party's report, "22 different

certificates or varieties of experience are held by 1074 health visitors in 88 different combinations" and outside London "there are 91 different minimum or fixed salaries in force" and no allowance is made by one authority for experience gained under another. The whole position and training of midwives is another matter for investigation, the Labour Party favouring a general training first and then specialisation in this particular branch and the nursing authorities pointing out the low remuneration which renders this course out of the question.

These are a few of the problems concerning the fully-trained nurse, but undoubtedly the defects in the present system are felt most by the most inarticulate and helpless of the nurses, namely the probationers. The nursing profession will never again attract the finest girls, or indeed many girls, until there is a revolution in the status and treatment of the probationer. She must be regarded in future as a student and not as a form of cheap labour nor even as a tiny cog in a vast machine. Possibly the Labour Party's scheme of a training school separate from the hospital may not be practical but, at least, more sister-tutors might be trained and employed for the sole purpose of looking after the student-nurses instead of this very important matter being left to an overworked sister already in charge of a number of patients or to no-one in particular. The working hours of the probationer should be arranged so as to include attendance at lectures if she is to pass the state examinations without undue strain instead of the present impossible position in many hospitals where a girl's off-duty time is snatched for this purpose. Her night-duty also should be severely curtailed. Above all, girls should be especially protected from the arbitrary and haphazard arrangements of small hospitals and convalescent homes where the worst conditions are to be found.

The discipline also will have to be radically altered if the nursing profession hopes to continue to attract refined or educated girls. The treatment of the probationer should be similar in spirit and type to that accorded to senior pupils in a secondary or high school instead of being of the sergeant-major

(Continued p. 81).

Notes and Comments.

We sincerely trust that the Equal Franchise Bill when it materialises, will be a simple franchise measure giving women the vote at the age of 21, and on the same terms as men, and that no contentious clauses will be added.

St. Joan's S.P.A. is moving an equal franchise resolution at the Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations.

* * * *

We are glad to see that Lady Iveagh, better known, perhaps, as Lady Elveden, is standing as candidate for Southend, the vacancy being created by her husband's succession to the peerage. Lady Iveagh is chairman of the Women's Section of the Conservative Party. We wish her success.

* * * *

We have received the following letter from the Rev. W. C. Roberts, chairman of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, respecting the Committee of Inquiry on Street Offences, recently set up by the Home Office:

There seems to be a certain amount of misunderstanding current as to the origin of the Committee of Inquiry on Street Offences recently appointed by the Home Secretary. May I be allowed to make clear the following points?

1. Following on the Public Places (Order) Bill introduced by Lady Astor in the Commons in July 1925—a bill prepared by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene—a request for this Committee of Inquiry was brought before the Home Secretary in November of that year, not by "women's organizations," but by the same Association, which is a society of both men and women. The deputation which we took to the Home Secretary had the important support of 42 societies, 18 of them representing men as well as women.

2. The ground of our "complaint" was not only that the laws regarding solicitation both in themselves and in their administration treat unjustly a certain number of women—or rather in most cases, young girls; but that, in any case and as regards any person, conviction on uncorroborated police evidence is a very questionable and dangerous practice. The deputation were not all agreed as to the right solution of this difficulty, but were all united as to the urgent need for thorough inquiry. Our bill required and provided for the evidence of the aggrieved person.

The issue in our minds was never one *only* of "justice to women," acutely as that point is felt. Matters would not be mended by extending more widely to men—a few men have

suffered from it—the treatment long meted out to "unfortunate" woman.

Recent cases, mainly concerned with men, have stirred public opinion; but have not, in fact, "enlarged the scope of the inquiry," which corresponds to the representations made two years ago.

It is, of course, desirable that any laws regarding solicitation should be equal between the sexes, but our aim is not limited to the point of equality: we desire a just and equal law for both sexes, based on sound legal principles and with due regard for the protection of the rights of accused persons.

Five women have been appointed to this Committee: Miss Marjery Fry, J.P., Miss E. H. Kelly, J.P., Ballie Mrs. Millar, Mrs. Wilson Fox, and Lady Joynson Hicks. As to the latter appointment, we consider it unfortunate. However competent Lady Joynson-Hicks may be to serve on this Committee, the fact that the report is to be made to her husband should, in our opinion, disqualify her. We regret that Miss Alison Neilans is not a member of the Committee, we do not suppose that there is another person in this country who has her wide knowledge of the subject.

The first public meetings will be held on November 17 and 18. We hope that the evidence given before the Committee will be published.

The Future of Nursing (continued).

variety. Only in this profession are students publicly and crushingly admonished by their superiors in the presence of patients whose respect it is all-important for the young nurse to maintain. Another indefensible practice is to deprive a girl of her off-duty time or even of her half-holiday as a punishment for breaches of discipline. Petty restrictions and petty tyranny are also far too common in hospital life and sometimes become more than petty as in the case quoted by Colonel Blackham where two nurses were dismissed merely for having been seen at a tea-shop with a medical student. To quote from Colonel Blackham's speech at the Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition, "as long as it remains a hospital practice to do this sort of thing, so long will the ranks of our typists be swollen and the ranks of our nurses be depleted."

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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St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance.

Dinner to Dom Gilbert Higgins.

Members and friends of St. Joan's S.P.A., who were present at the dinner given by the Alliance on October 18, at the Rendez vous, in honour of Dom Gilbert Higgins will long remember this gathering as a most enjoyable and interesting function.

The Chairman, Miss Douglas Irvine pointed out that it was in a way an epoch in the annals of the Alliance, both from the number of international guests, and the number of men guests present. Among those who had assembled to do honour to Dom Gilbert Higgins, were Señor Gaspard, Spanish Consul General, Señora Gaspard, the Marques and Marquesa del Ter (Madrid), Don Sturzo, Dr. Mary Beadon, Mr. Beadon, Mr. Paulit (India), Miss Tessa de Alberti (U.S.A.)

The Chairman read the following letter from Father Philip Fletcher, unfortunately unable to be present:

"I am much touched by the kind thought which has inspired you and your Committee. I have as you know been an admirer of your work for a long time.

I am here in a nursing home, and am unable to get out for an evening. Indeed I get out very little, being so constantly unwell, and "dinners" are impossible. I am afraid my day is over.

God bless you all and your work."

Miss Douglas Irvine gave a brief report of the work of the Alliance, especially of the recent meetings for Equal Franchise at Hampstead Heath and Hyde Park.

Miss Kathleen FitzGerald who proposed the toast of the chief guest of the evening, spoke of the support and sympathy the Alliance had received from Dom Gilbert Higgins since its foundation right through the early and dangerous years of the Suffrage fight. Dom Gilbert Higgins rising to reply was received with great enthusiasm, the audience standing and singing "For he's a jolly good fellow." Dom Gilbert said he has always been interested in the society, and admired its work. It was his great aim to bring all young Catholic women into the movement, he would never cease to urge them by pen and tongue to join and be led by St. Joan's Alliance, and taken an interest in upholding their full rights as women citizens. He knew that they could find no better teachers than the members of St. Joan's S.P.A. He would continue to pray for the success of the work of the Alliance.

Señor Gaspard speaking in the name of the guests, expressed appreciation of the welcome given to them, and amused his audience by dating feminism from the Garden of Eden,

where Eve stole a march on Adam.

For the second part of the programme, we had a musical treat. Mr. Jean Baptiste Toner, gave a fine rendering of some of Chopin's preludes which was greatly appreciated, and Miss Tessa de Alberti, and Miss Edith Delaney charmed us with their singing.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews in an amusing speech, told the audience that a four C's committee had been formed—the Catholic Citizen Circulation Committee. During her recent tour she had been pleased to find that the *Catholic Citizen* was well known and appreciated in other lands by feminist societies. She appealed for volunteers to come forward for paper-selling as in the good old days.

Miss Sheila Hynes, in the name of voteless young women, thanked Dom Gilbert Higgins for his support of the woman's movement.

We shall remember the evening as one of the pleasantest functions given by the Alliance, and one which we feel sure has brought us new friendships. L. de A.

* * * *

The Jumble Sale organised by the four C's committee realised £10 11s. 7d., profit.

Dr. Mary Beadon "on India."

On October 27, a meeting was held at the 1920 Club, Whitehall (by kind permission of Captain Martin) under the auspices of St. Joan's S.P.A., at which our member, Dr. Mary Beadon, W.M. S., gave an address on her experiences in India. Dr. Beadon who is Superintendent of the Government Victoria Hospital, Madras, began her speech by commenting on Miss Mayo's book, "*Mother India*," which is in her opinion an unfair criticism of conditions in India. As regards child marriage, the author does not always distinguish between the legal marriage and the consummation of marriage. A great deal was being done to ameliorate the lot of Indian women. Dr. Beadon spoke of the hostel for widows, which was entirely the work of Mrs. Drysdale present in this audience, also a member of St. Joan's. The Indian Women's Association, and the servants of Indian societies composed of Indians, were doing much to help; the best plan was to strengthen their hands; bitter criticism could do no good.

The second speaker was Miss Douglas Irvine, M.A., who gave an interesting report of the N.C.W. Conference at Bournemouth at which she was delegate for St. Joan's S.P.A. Miss Irvine spoke of the success achieved by Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, B.A., at the opening meeting for young women; her speech being reported in many papers. Miss Irvine reported that the resolution which she had moved on behalf of St. Joan's, advocating the raising of the age of marriage, had been carried unanimously. The chair was taken by Miss Fedden, who was replaced by Miss Butler-Bowden, as she had to leave before the end of the meeting.

Equal Franchise Campaign.

Members will have read in the general press of the very successful meeting of young women, addressed by Miss Nancy Stuart Parnell at the N.C.W. Conference at Bournemouth. Both she and Miss Patricia Hall, another "Under Thirty" member of the Liverpool branch, are busily engaged speaking on Equal Franchise for many women's organisations in and around Liverpool.

In connection with the Equal Political Rights Campaign, Miss Butler-Bowden is organising weekly poster parades in Whitehall and in Theatreland. Volunteers are urgently needed and are asked to send in their names to the office.

On Saturday, December 3, the Alliance will hold a meeting in Hyde Park at 3 p.m. Members are asked to come and support it.

Now that Parliament has reassembled we are working to obtain the support of certain individual Members of Parliament for the Franchise Bill.

Amsterdam Meeting.

Miss Douglas Irvine will represent the Alliance at the International Committee Meeting of the Board of the Alliance and Presidents of Auxiliaries to be held in Amsterdam in November. Miss Barry will attend the meeting of the Enfranchised Women's Committee on behalf of the three British Auxiliaries of the International Alliance.

Miss Butler-Bowden has kindly offered to attend the Peace Study Conference on behalf of St. Joan's Alliance.

International Notes.

Our member, Mrs. Mary Murray, has written a letter to the United States *Tablet* answering an attack which has been made in the pulpit by the Reverend William Boyd on the policy of the National Women's Party, this being the feminist organization in the United States which opposes the so-called protective legislation for women. "The National Women's Party," she says, "is not in favour of working women long hours. It, however, stands squarely on the platform of a square deal for women in industry; that is women are to have the same chance as men." She protests against the handicap placed on women when their working day is limited and not that of men.

* * * *

We have received an excellent first number of *L'Action Féminine* a monthly journal published by the three-year-old feminist society of Luxembourg. We wish our contemporary all good luck and congratulate its founders. H. D. I.

* * * *

The September number of the "*The Week*" Calcutta, an interesting Catholic journal with which we exchange the '*Catholic Citizen*,' has an editorial note congratulating the two women editors of a new journal for educated Indian women, dealing not only with domestic matters, but with the activities and achievements of women all the world over. It is by such, solid, same silent work, done by women themselves, and by that alone the purdah system, and all it stands for can be undone, says the "*Week*." The same number contains a reprint of the article on the Good Shepherd Convent, Malta, which appeared in the July number of the *Catholic Citizen*.

* * * *

The Women's Movement in India continues to make good progress. *Stri Dharma* reports that the only woman member of the Legislative Councils in British India has taken up the question of the abolition of "sanctified vice," or the dedicating of girls to the temples. Large meetings in the Madras Presidency are calling for the ending of immoral traffic in women and children, both as commercialised vice in the ordinary brothels of cities, and under the exercise of

religious custom with the dancing girls of the temple. Add to this the agitation for the raising of the age of consent, and one may gather to what extent Indian women are awaking.

L. A.

One Road to Rome.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A CONVERT,

By Mrs. C. E. Jeffery. Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1s.

This book, small in size but extraordinary full and satisfying to the critical reader, is exactly what so many of us seek at Christmas to send to well-loved friends who have climbed into Peter's Boat during the year. Written in the first person, it tells, with exquisite sincerity, and a rare literary skill of the early years of an Anglican whose life was set in childhood in the uncompromising atmosphere of the old-fashioned parsonage but who "came home" in her early womanhood. Our author weaves an amazing amount of the information which the social and religious historian of the future will surely find valuable, into the account of her own religious doubts and fears. For this reason, may I venture to suggest the addition of certain dates to a later printing of this fascinating story? The personal part is told with an admirable restraint which some other writers in this field might well emulate. There emerges the fair and fine picture of a woman of singular honesty, clear-thinking and direct of purpose; with her, to hear was to obey. I wish I might quote certain (*very* numerous!) passages that enthralled one very tired reader; I can only recommend all who appreciate good, true work to get this book without delay; its finished style is as enticing as its sweet austerity. May I add that Mrs. C. E. Jeffery is the mother of our own incomparable founder, Gabrielle Jeffery? How much, beyond all counting do we of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance—the Catholic Suffrage Society in the history of the women's fight for political freedom—owe to this brave lady, her mother! She is, as she says, with every passing year increasingly thankful by the grace of God to have been "brought from the City of Confusion to the peace and security of the Catholic Church." Mary Wall.

The Labour Party and Birth Control.

Our congratulations to our member and Miss Quinn, and other speakers, who defeated the advocates of Birth Control at the Labour Conference. Miss Quinn said (in opposing the motion to refer back the Executive's recommendation that birth control ought not to be made a party political issue), that she was proud of coming from a place where Labour members were returned by the Irish Catholic vote. Public funds included Irish Catholic money, and she protested against using it as proposed; that is, for giving information on birth control. We take our information from the *Daily Herald*.

Dance.

Those who attended the dance last New Year which was organised so successfully by Miss Monica O'Connor will be interested to know that she is organising another to be held on November 25, at St. Patrick's Schools at 8-15 to 11-30 p.m. (Chapel Street, Oxford Street, (opposite Bourne and Hollingsworth.)

Therefore we appeal to our "Under Thirties" to keep this date free and to bring their men friends. Not only do we ask the "Under Thirties" to take tickets, but all our members, for the age of dancing extends now from 3 to 70.

Refreshments will be served at very moderate prices, and a good band is engaged for the evening.

Please apply at once for tickets, price 2s. 6d.

Christmas Sale.

The Green Gold and White Fair organised by the Women's Freedom League, will be held at the Caxton Hall on November 23 and 24, from 3 to 9 p.m.

As usual, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance will have a stall there on the two days and we appeal for helpers to dress the stall, for saleswomen, and above all for goods to sell.

St. Joan's stall has always set a good standard of quality and taste, and gives real value for money spent, and we must see that the standard is kept up in 1927.

Come and buy your Christmas presents at our stall.

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FitzGerald, Miss K.	...	12	6	
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Minimum Annual Subscriptions	...	7	0	

* Christmas Sale. £14 17 6

TREASURER'S NOTE.

But a few days remain, after this paper appears, for sending in gifts or donations for the Christmas Sale on November 23 and 24. Members can help particularly by coming to it and buying their Christmas presents at our stall. They are also asked to buy tickets for the Dance on November 25 (2/6), and if they cannot come themselves, to give them to young friends. Both these events will help to swell our Equal Franchise Campaign Fund. Let no one think a good fund is not necessary. We must work hard for success, and leave nothing to chance. G. JEFFERY.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

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

The Sixth General Meeting of the Branch was held on October 31 at 13 Elizabeth Street, by kind invitation of Mrs. Murphy. The speaker was Mr. Sydney Lamb, M.B.E., who interested the members in the new scheme for saving the Voluntary Hospitals here, of which he is the organizer. During the Municipal elections the Branch sent resolutions concerning the lack of religious facilities for Catholic nurses in Corporation Hospitals, and concerning the need for Women Police, to the Chairman of the Liverpool Catholic Representation Association. A few members also assisted women candidates by canvassing, etc.

Miss Patricia Hall, B.Sc., has been speaking as a representative of the Branch at several meetings organized by the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage Committee.

The Branch has received an invitation to a pageant on November 20, in which St. Joan will figure prominently, from Father O'Neill, parish priest of the only church in England dedicated to St. Joan of Arc.

The prayers of members are asked for the repose of the soul of Mrs. Maguire, one of our members.—R.I.P.

**ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL ALLIANCE.**

NON-PARTY.

Office—55, Berners St., Oxford St., London, W.
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Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 2d. monthly.

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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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