

Equal Rights

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FIVE CENTS

SATURDAY,
JULY 4, 1925



Crystal Eastman

Member of the Editorial Board of Equal Rights, who is sending news letters from London, England.

Feminist Notes

A Legislative Bungle

A MIXUP is likely to result in France from the recent election of a number of women as municipal councilors. It turns out that their election was illegal, there being no provision in the law making women eligible. But, although the law does not allow their election, they cannot be excluded from office until the courts have passed on the matter, because no one is legally authorized to interfere. Having once been accepted by the voters, they must be allowed to assume office and perform official functions until the legal tribunal hears all the arguments and renders a decision. In the meantime all that can be done is to warn the new councilors that should the courts declare their course illegal they will be liable for whatever damage may result from their official acts. This the Minister of the Interior has done, but it is by no means certain that his warning will receive attention.

A Voters' School

A POLITICAL school for women has been opened in Paris designed to acquaint prospective new voters with the tricks of the politician's trade, and the ways to detect and to fight them. The announcement states that there will be a preparatory session during the summer, but that the normal session will begin in November. There is also reported to be some trouble in finding competent instructors. However, practical experience with one campaign will give the women a better insight into political methods than the best of schools can give.

The Suffrage Issue in Palestine

A SPLIT on the question of woman suffrage took place in Jerusalem on June 16 at the session of the national assembly of Palestine Jews. The progressive wing stood for full suffrage and the right of women to membership in the assembly. The orthodox opposed and finally seceded. Later these recalcitrants issued a call for a separate organization opposed to the admission of women.

An Alleged Chinese Amazon

ACCORDING to the Hearst papers, a woman named Wong is one of the generals in command of the Kwangtung forces in Southern China which recently retook the city of Canton from the Yuman army, the mercenaries said to be acting in the interest of Japan. The Hearst papers print General Wong's picture, but offer no other evidence of the truth of the story.

Bermuda Legislators Frown on Progress

THE backward people of the earth seem well represented in the Bermuda House of Assembly, if one may judge from the vote on an equal suffrage bill on April 2. The bill was drawn long before the session, discussed at many public meetings and advocated in the press. Presented in Parliament, the opposition was unable to urge an argument against it, for not a single member on that side of the house opened his mouth. But when it came to a vote 24 members who had been unable to think of an objection worth stating in public, or who, perhaps, feel little interest in the merits of measures on which they must pass, cast their votes against it, while but nine were in favor. A property qualification prevails at present in Bermuda, both for suffrage and office holding, in addition to the sex qualification, but the absence of an intelligence qualification as well as a sense of justice qualification is obvious in two-thirds of the districts.

Domestic Accord Comes First

ALTHOUGH it is by no means an unusual occurrence for a man with political ambitions to refuse a nomination on account of his wife's objections, the newspapers consider worthy of extended notice a case where these conditions are reversed. In the seventeenth aldermanic district of New York Mrs. Maurice B. Blumenthal was offered the Democratic nomination for alderman, but declined, stating that her husband objected. Thus those timid souls who feared the disruptive effect of equal suffrage on domestic peace have a practical example which shows the groundless nature of their apprehensions.

A Woman in the Swim

A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD girl, Miss Gertrude Ederle of New York, will attempt to break the record in swimming the English Channel from Dover to Calais. She will be the first woman to accomplish that feat regardless of the time in which she does it. She already holds several swimming records, including that from the Battery to Sandy Hook.

A Woman Captain

THE sea-going vessel Ruth Martin, of American registry, is the only one so far to be commanded by a woman captain. She is Mrs. Jennie Crocker of Cliftondale, Mass., a graduate of Pugsley's Nautical School. Her husband is first mate on the same vessel.

Long Working Days for Texas Men

A CINCINNATI labor paper reports with considerable satisfaction:

"Under the law in Texas women are prohibited from working more than 54 hours a week except in the cotton mills. In cotton mills they are limited to 10 hours a day and 60 hours a week, and must be paid overtime when they work more than nine hours daily."

That the law fixes so high a maximum applicable to women only indicates that male Texans are willing to work still longer hours to get the jobs away from women, and are moreover contented to waive overtime pay. Texas law changes an old saw to make it read something like this:

"A woman may work from sun to sun Till displaced by men who never get done."

Another Crumb for a Woman

A WOMAN member of the cabinet or chief of a bureau is still in the future in this country, but President Coolidge has advanced far enough to appoint a woman as Register of the Land Office in San Francisco. She is Mrs. Lida M. Hume.

Still Disagreeing

MRS. JULIA CUSTER of Logansport, Indiana, is the Republican candidate for judge of the police court. Her opponent on the Democratic ticket is her former husband and recently divorced.

Equal Pay Demanded

THE New York *Evening Post* of June 5 stated that counsel for forty-one women teachers of the Albany High School will appeal to the State Commissioner of Education from a ruling of the Albany City Board of Education denying a request for salary increases to the same level as that of men teachers.

The women presented a petition to the board on June 2, basing their request upon the Equal Pay Law, which was passed in 1924 through the efforts of the Woman's Party, the State Teachers' Welfare League, the Albany League of Classroom Teachers and the State Teachers' Association.

The women contended that men teachers, through special classifications, are being paid an average of \$400 more a year than the women.

A Woman Tax Collector

THE first woman tax collector in Maryland was appointed on June 24 by Burgess Ray F. Rohrer of Funkstown. She is Mrs. Ida Williams.

A Wife For Uncle Sam

By Ruby A. Black

"UNCLE SAM NEEDS A WIFE," says Ida Clyde Clarke, contributing editor of *Pictorial Review*, president of the *Woman's News Service*, and one of the best informed women in America on the activities of women and the causes they foster.

He needs a wife, she says, to eliminate the extravagance in his national house-keeping, and she points out ludicrous and scandalous wastes in the chapter, "Spend-thrift on the Potomac," which opens her book, "Uncle Sam Needs a Wife."* He needs a wife, she says, because he needs a woman's hand and brain and heart in every department of his government, which she refers to as "his bachelor establishment on Capitol Hill." He needs a wife likewise because he needs a mother for his children, she adds. We must add that when he gets a wife he and she must have equal rights in the duties and responsibilities and privileges of this national housekeeping business. Mrs. Clarke believes this, too, as is evident from her recent entrance into the National Woman's Party.

But Mrs. Clarke finds that the prospective wife of Uncle Sam needs a lot of training to make her the efficient partner she ought to be (just as her husband needs similar training). For instance, she must learn a technique for accomplishing what she wants. Mrs. Clarke said when she joined the Woman's Party that she did so because this organization of women knows what it wants and has developed a technique for getting it. Furthermore, she must eliminate her inferiority complex. She must also demand that women be handpicked for positions of public trust, and must not permit these positions to go to inadequate women through party accident or party expediency. She must also relinquish her "shoe-string philosophy" before she can laugh out of court man's "swivel-chair soul." She must become economically literate and scientifically investigative as well as technically effective. She must stop being a "human crab," and do things in her own way, not in man's way, unless man's way is demonstrated to be the best way. She must learn to respect women's enterprises and women's achievements, and not depend on men for organization and leadership.

Mrs. Clarke points out the discriminations against women in various other fields besides those of public office and politics: In the Hall of Fame—"the money for which was given by a woman,"

in the National Academy of Design, where for so long there was no woman member; in the National Academy of Arts and Letters, where there is no woman, and where, as she says, surely if Robert W. Chambers "roams at will," Edith Wharton, and, we may add, Willa Cather, Fannie Hurst, Edna Ferber, Zona Gale, and others are eligible; in the National Academy of Science, she might have added, to which Dr. Florence Sabin was only recently elected, the first woman ever admitted; in the home; in the laws concerned with sex (here she quotes from Edith Houghton Hooker's "The Laws of Sex," which she says no sincere student can afford to miss reading).

Besides needing a wife, Mrs. Clarke thinks Uncle Sam needs a real woman editor. With the press the most powerful agency affecting public opinion, Mrs. Clarke says:

"No woman is controlling the editorial policy of a single newspaper of consequence in the world.

"No woman is writing headlines for the front page of any newspaper of consequence in the world.

"No woman decides what stories shall be 'played up' and 'boxed' in any newspaper of consequence in the world."

She further points out that only one newspaper of consequence in the United States—the *Christian Science Monitor*—has a woman in charge of its Washington Bureau. It is also true that no other woman is continuously writing news of Washington politics on the same basis with the men correspondents. They are doing "fluff" and "social stuff" more or less superficial in nature. A recent article in *The Matrix*, a magazine for women in journalism, pointed out the need for women writers of local, State and National political news, and analyzed the present situation in which women have so small a part. Mrs. Clarke likewise objects, quite rightly, to men's control of women's magazines and women's pages in newspapers, and demands more intelligent and comprehensive women's news and features. Mrs. Clarke is making a difficult and valiant struggle to establish an agency for collecting and distributing a better type of women's news. She says " * * * better news about women is the short cut to most of the goals for which we are striving."

In her chapter, "Sauce for the Goose," Mrs. Clarke discusses the failure of the woman's movement to see clearly what

women want and to unite in a concentrated effort to get what they want. Here she writes of the National Woman's Party and its fight for equal rights in every field of human endeavor. Her discussion is on the whole intelligent and fair. She saw, even then, the thinness and ridiculousness of most of the arguments made by women against women's equality in rights and responsibilities. She makes one statement, however, which should be corrected. She says that the proponents of the Equal Rights Amendment believe that the passage of the amendment will secure for women: "Equal control of their children; equal control of their property; equal control of their earnings; equal right to make contracts; equal citizenship rights; equal control of National, State and local government; equal opportunity in schools and universities; equal opportunities in government service; equal pay for equal work; equal rights after marriage to their own identity; equal moral standards. In short, 'equal rights with men in all laws and customs.'"

The proponents of the amendment make no such claims. They know that the legal inequalities can be corrected by the amendment; just about the first five items in the list may be assured in large measure by the passage of the amendment. The rest—equality in custom and economic condition—must be brought about by a process of education, of which the passage of the amendment is only a part. The amendment will only clear the way for the gaining of equality in every aspect of life. It is the purpose of the Woman's Party, of course, never to relinquish its efforts till all this equality shall have been won, and is permanently maintained. The passage of the Equal Rights Amendment is one part of that great aim, and equal rights legislation now being sought and achieved in the various States by the Woman's Party is a first step toward the accomplishment of that aim.

Mrs. Clarke's style is simple and forceful, as her thinking is direct and incisive. The purpose of the book is earnest and sincere. It ends with a plea for "a female Moses" to lead women out of the wilderness of subordination. In this chapter she discusses the leadership of various women, including Alice Paul. To her almost despairing cry, "And oh, what might not happen if only twelve of our own great American women, or only two of our national women's organizations, would hold together for only one year on only one thing!" many of us will find an echo in our own hearts, which are bent on equality for men and women.

Equal Rights



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OBJECT OF THE WOMAN'S PARTY

To remove all forms of the subjection of
women.

THE LUCRETIA MOTT AMENDMENT

"Men and women shall have Equal Rights
throughout the United States
and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

"Congress shall have power to enforce
this article by appropriate legislation"

[Senate Joint Resolution Number 21.
House Joint Resolution Number 75.]

Introduced in the Senate, December 10, 1923,
by SENATOR CHARLES E. CURTIS.
Introduced in the House of Representatives,
December 13, 1923,
by REPRESENTATIVE D. R. ANTHONY.

The Declaration of Independence

AMONG the great documents that will be forever treasured by upstanding humanity is "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," to which on July 4, 1776, fifty-six colonial gentlemen affixed their signatures. It is impossible for any American citizen to read this Declaration without a thrill of pride at possessing so brave a heritage.

At the same time, in view of current law and custom, it is impossible for any feminist reader to suppress a sigh at the cramped vision that beheld, and even today beholds but a half truth when the whole is so splendidly apparent. The dignity and lasting value of the Declaration of Independence lies in the fact that it states in simple language certain permanent values in the relations of human beings.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," run the immortal words, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

To have been among the first to phrase these sentiments, boldly to have put one's hand to words casting defiance at established order and proclaiming revolution in behalf of human liberty, was to achieve a station in the annals of mankind forever enviable. But after the accomplishment of this gallant feat then to assume the role of tyrant toward one-half the race was to bring victory to defeat, honor to dishonor.

That women remained disfranchised for nearly a century and a half after the Declaration of Independence was written is a tragedy that passes the power of words for expression. One hundred and forty-nine years ago today the doctrine of equal rights was phrased as clearly as it could be stated in human language, but it has not yet been incorporated as a principle in the Federal Constitution. All human beings are not equal before the law in the United States of America; nor can they be while there is one kind of law for men and another kind for women. Constitutional guarantees designed to prevent class legislation and to insure an equal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are abrogated daily in the case of American women.

The high purpose of the Declaration of Independence still remains to be fulfilled and we of the National Woman's Party understanding the full significance of Equal Rights may well inaugurate Independence Day by repeating the final words of the original document: "And for the support of the Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

On a Cash Basis

SEASONED suffragists will readily recall how frequently the argument that women were "supported" was used in the olden days against votes for women. It was said, and with conviction, that since men earned most of the money and paid most of the taxes, the revolutionary slogan, "*Taxation without representation is tyranny*," applied to the male sex alone. Especially was this dictum used to put wives in their proper places.

Nowadays, in a slightly different form, the same argument appears against equal rights. Wives are "supported" by husbands, and, of course, the glad assumption follows that all women worthy of consideration are married, hence the burdened male has an inalienable right to priority in the gainful occupations. Since he must support a woman it is not nice to have a woman commandeer his job as well as his income. Very reasonable it sounds, at least to him.

But the income tax returns tell a different story. In 1923, for example, the number of women, that is wives, making separate income tax returns from husbands, and women reporting as heads of families, totaled 323,242, and their net income was \$1,401,911,517; the number of men making returns as heads of families totaled 413,682, with a net income of \$1,258,846,888.

These figures do not include women, or, for that matter, men, who are not heads of families, but who reported a separate independent income and paid a tax thereon.

While these figures do not tell the whole story with regard to the sources of income tax receipts, still they provide grounds for doubt as to the complete validity of the support theory. A billion and a quarter dollars is quite a little money per annum; enough, at least in the case of men, to relieve them of the charge of pauperism or dependency as a sex.

The British Labour Women's Conference

By Crystal Eastman

PEOPLE are so much more interesting than politics. As I sit down to tell the story of the British Labour Women's Conference, which I attended last week at Birmingham, I find it is the women themselves I want to write about, not the resolutions they passed. I wish the man who wrote that ugly article called "Politician Female," which appeared in some American journal about a year ago, had been at Birmingham on May 27 and 28—he would have had to hide his head.

It is quite true that women's voices are seldom well placed for public speaking. In the effort to make themselves heard in a large hall with bad acoustics, their voices as a rule become shrill and the tone diffused, and that makes it hard to listen to them, whatever they say. This seems particularly true of English women's voices. (Popular tradition to the contrary, I think it is the American "talking through his nose," i. e., *with his nose clear for breathing*, who has his voice comparatively well placed.) I believe I have never heard an Englishwoman speaking in public with a good voice, except on the stage. Their voices strike me as singularly high and shallow, and when they try to make them loud the tone scatters hopelessly.

It is easy enough to ridicule any convention of earnest people trying to get something done, and the inadequacy of their voices makes it especially easy to ridicule a woman's convention. That is one thing. There was for me another comic element in this woman's convention at Birmingham. The delegates followed the custom which, I am told, is common at labour conventions here of standing on their chairs whenever they speak from the floor. I could hardly believe my eyes when I first saw women of every size and shape and of every age climbing nimbly on to their chairs to get the attention of the platform. I looked around for smiles, but everyone took it as a matter of course. So I contented myself with trying to think why the women looked so funny standing on their chairs and what they reminded me of. Suddenly it came to me that they were like those impossibly tall clowns with long skirts to cover their stilts that sometimes stalk solemnly through a circus crowd. The heads and shoulders of the women sitting close round them concealed their feet and the chair on which they stood, just as the clown's long skirt conceals his stilts. And the effect, at first, was startling and funny in the same way. They were strange gaunt creatures, grotesquely tall, swaying and gesticulating above the heads of the crowd. After an hour they became commonplace. Except,

then, for voices going shrill with effort and excitement and this surprising "clown-on-stilts" effect, there was not much for even a very young man to make fun of in this meeting of Labour women at Birmingham. That is not to say there was no laughter going on. There was, plenty of it. I begin to think women are the humorous sex, after all. A convention takes its tone largely from the chairman, and Ellen Wilkinson was chairman. This shrewd young red-haired Lancashire lass, Ellen Wilkinson, M. P., the only Labour woman now in Parliament, has the great gift of humorous platform ease. She is as disarming, as full of merry quips and gay, good-natured repartee as Lloyd George himself.

The chairman was a joy in herself and she found a ready response to her mood in the delegates. This was a genuine working-class convention, certainly no more than 100 of the 860 present were "intellectuals," and there are no people in the world so little inhibited by respectability, so little oppressed by their own self-importance, so little burdened with hypocrisy, and therefore so *laughter-loving*, as the British working class.

Perhaps the first Women's Labour Conference, called eighteen years ago under the inspiration of Margaret Macdonald, Mary Middleton and Mary MacArthur, was more representative of the middle-class element in the party. The conference numbered forty women then. Last week at Birmingham 860 delegates assembled and their proletarian character was unmistakable. There was a scattering of forty delegates representing the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Fabian Society and the I. L. P., and about seventy-five from the trades-unions, but 731 were sent to Birmingham to represent women's sections of the Labour Party. Of these the vast bulk were working-class housewives, wives and mothers for whom there is no servant problem because there is no servant.

One hardly needed figures to know this. It was enough to look at them—here and there an eager pale young face and pretty home-made clothes, but then rows and rows of the beaten-looking women that make your heart ache for the poverty of England, a poverty so cruelly hard on women. Years of struggle with dirt and cold and low wages was written on their pale unhealthy faces, in their battered-looking bodies and rough misshapen hands, in their old thick, dark and dreary clothes.

TAKE, for instance, the modern and highly contentious issue of birth control, which is usually debated with such tense and awkward earnestness. I heard these women dispose of it amid gusts and gales of laughter. It is not illegal in England to give information in regard to contraceptives, nor to manufacture and sell contraceptive devices. Several private birth control clinics flourish in London. The issue here is raised in connection with the public health centers. Two years ago it was timidly discussed by the Labour women. Last year after a valiant fight a group of young intellectuals in which Mrs. Bertrand Russell and Mrs. Harold Laski are prominent put through their resolution calling upon the Minister of Health to allow birth control information to be given out at health centers supported by public funds. The request was duly made to Mr. Wheatley, one of the Clyde Socialists, at that time Minister of Health under the Labour Government, and Mr. Wheatley, who is a Catholic, of course refused. Therefore the matter came up again at Birmingham. This time the resolution read:

"This conference is of opinion that it should be permissible for doctors employed in any medical service for which public funds are provided to give information on birth control to married people who desire it." A young professor's wife, in seconding the resolution, said: "I am going to address my remarks to the platform for obvious reasons." She referred, no doubt, to the bitter platform opposition at last year's birth control debate. But this was Miss Wilkinson's chance to set the ensuing debate in the right key.

"The last speaker," she said, in throwing the question open for general discussion, "told us she was addressing her remarks to the platform for 'obvious reasons.' But I don't know what she means. It is so obvious that neither your chairman nor your secretary is in need—" and the end of the sentence was drowned, as she meant it to be, in shouts of laughter. Thus did this most lovable chairman rid the discussion before it began of that awkward, half-concealed fencing between the married and the unmarried, which makes a birth control debate so often uncomfortable. And when the first opponent rose, an unmistakable spinster of fifty or sixty, a Catholic and Socialist of the old school, they began their laughing protest before she could speak. "What does she know about it?" "Where is her wedding ring?" were the frank but not unkind comments to be distinguished in the uproar. But the old lady won a laugh of her own when she appealed to the chair-

man to "please control her birth controllers." The delegates settled down in amused silence and listened while she denounced birth control as "a crime against God and humanity." But when she called it an insidious issue which would split the Labour Party, they burst out again and she had to sit down.

"I am a Catholic, too," said a stout motherly woman climbing on to her chair, "and a good Catholic. And I want to say that the Catholics better be honest. They are all practicing birth control if they've got the information. I am the mother of thirteen children, but I wouldn't be if I'd known what to do. The information came to me too late. Yes, thank God, it's too late—or at least I hope so." This set them off again. There was a sentimental speech about a gardener who would not stop planting roses because the water supply was cut off. This caused some amusement, as did the protest of the woman who said she was the tenth child in her family and she couldn't help being glad that her mother didn't know anything about birth control. Then there were two dyed-in-the-wool Socialists who maintained that birth control was wholly a matter of economics, that it would not be needed in the co-operative commonwealth. This was disposed of by an earnest young mother, who said: "Even in the co-operative commonwealth, if it ever comes, I think a woman will want to choose her time and decide how many." Then the debate was closed for lack of further opposition, and the resolution was carried with not more than six dissenting votes.

I have dwelt on this birth control discussion not only because it revealed so much humor, but because it convinced me that it is exceedingly important for women to maintain separate organizations within the political parties to which they as voters belong. If a woman's party

conference is to be merely an echo, no matter how enthusiastic, of the platform already adopted by the main party organization to which they as individuals are affiliated, it is hardly worth the paper and print and postage required to call it together. But if such a conference gives organized expression to the woman's emphasis in politics, then it is important. What, then, is the woman's emphasis in politics? For some time to come it is bound to fall on measures concerning her own freedom and opportunity and on measures which aim to secure a better chance for children. Birth control is an issue which in a peculiar way unites these two concerns.

It is significant then that whereas the question of birth control has yet to be raised at a regular British Labour Party Conference, British Labour women have met it, debated it and disposed of it within the last two years.

It was, however, by no means only on this issue that these British working women spoke, not as Socialist women, not as party women, but as women.

Several other resolutions were passed of a distinctly feminist character. There was one "calling upon the Labour Party to deal stringently with any representative of the Labour Party who does not support sex equality economically, educationally and politically." Another pledged the women's sections "to immediately levy themselves a small sum weekly as a political fund for the express purpose of running working women candidates for Parliament." During the debate on the Franchise bill there was frequent criticism expressed of the Labour Government for not pushing forward the equal franchise measure during their months of office. And the chairman's opening address included a demand that a reasonable number of "passible seats" should be

assigned to women candidates for Parliament. These indications were reassuring to an anxious feminist. The delegates seemed to be aware that even within the ranks of the British Labour Party woman must still fight for "her place in the sun."

But it cannot be said that the conference was primarily interested in any form of "women's rights." It was primarily interested in housing, in stronger regulations to secure clean food and pure milk, in Dr. Marion Phillip's able report advocating a National Wheat Board to ensure cheap bread, in health and maternity insurance, in the actual results of the emigration policy measured in human terms, in putting a trained nurse in every elementary and secondary school. And their discussion of these matters revealed much evidence of detailed knowledge and patient study, much of the wisdom that is based on personal experience and cannot be gainsaid, and a wealth of concrete practical suggestions which no ordinary Labour Conference would have brought to light.

It is not, I think, that women are more humanitarian than men. It is that these matters of ordinary human welfare are their own trade interests, their professional concerns. "If we ever deal with the food question," said Dr. Phillips, "women must give the lead. Women are concerned with food all the time, men only when they see it in front of them." "Housing is of far more concern to women than to men," said another speaker. "A woman often has to spend twenty-four out of the twenty-four hours in her house." And somebody might have said: "Women resent the waste of child life with a special passion, as an architect resents the wanton destruction of beautiful buildings."

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New York Teachers Press Forward

MISS RENA ROCKWELL, chairman of the New York State Teachers' Council of the Woman's Party, has just been unanimously re-elected president of the Elmira Teachers' Association. Miss Rockwell's efforts in behalf of equal pay, culminating in Justice Leon C. Rhodes' affirmative decision for the teachers, have already been reported in EQUAL RIGHTS.

Albany, Schenectady and Syracuse teachers are fighting for the enforcement of the equal pay law. Forty-one Albany women teachers have appealed to the State Commissioner of Education from a ruling of the Albany Board of Education denying them equal pay.

On June 1st the Syracuse Board of Education prepared a new scale for

women teachers in junior and senior High Schools, providing for salaries of \$1,600 to \$2,400, with annual increments, whereas the present scale for men teachers, which is enjoyed by women teachers under the temporary arrangement under the equal pay law, runs up to \$2,650. Men teachers will continue to receive the salary they are getting now. Women High School teachers now receiving \$2,650 will be reduced to \$2,400 under the schedule, but actually to \$2,160, as the accompanying resolution provides a reduction of 10 per cent throughout the new scale "until adequate funds are provided." In other words, salaries of women teachers now receiving the men's maximum, \$2,650, will be cut by \$490 on September 1st.

At a meeting of the Syracuse Women

High School Teachers' Association the teachers voted to stand by strict enforcement of the State Equal Pay Law in its application locally by negotiation with the Board of Education if possible, but if necessary, to carry the case to court for a test.

Under the leadership of Mrs. L. E. Whittic, State Vice-Chairman, and chairman of the Syracuse Branch of the Woman's Party, a teachers' council has been organized and is actively working in Syracuse. The council is urging the county committees of the political parties to nominate candidates for the Syracuse Board of Education who favor and will insist upon strict enforcement of the equal pay law.

Margaret Sanger

By Hugh de Selincourt

"We do wrong to ourselves and others when we dilute any appreciation that is sincere."
—Mark Rutherford.



Margaret Sanger

SOME years ago Havelock Ellis suggested that I should meet Margaret Sanger. I expressed myself vaguely delighted, and in my heart hoped that the pleasure might be deferred. I knew that she had gone to prison for a cause, and however excellent a cause might be, I am inclined to think that earnestness is a quality which, admirable as it undoubtedly is in man or woman, may be most properly admired at a distance. It is moreover possible, though one hardly likes to mention it, to presume upon martyrdom: the only hope for ordinary intercourse is that it should be forgotten, it—so difficult to forget.

Alarm at meeting a woman of such terrible fixity of purpose must have peered out from every word of my note in answer to the letter naming the day of meeting. At any rate it evolved a long and delightful reply written to soothe my mind of its anxiety. The sternness of purpose was not denied, but other qualities, not usually connected with the moral reformer, were insisted upon with the most refreshing warmth. It was pointed out that the distressing self-importance which has been known to mark the behavior of persons whose names have been rendered famous was wholly absent. Her charm and graciousness and humor were emphasized and a poem in her honor quoted in lengthy extracts, as containing some of the truth, understatement being inferred as the encomium's characteristic rather than overstatement.

For all that, so obstinately do some minds cling to their prejudices, there was a distinct sense of relief when I was told that she was prevented from coming to the tea-party, arranged for the meeting, and for which I had obediently come up specially from the country. I bore with resignation the fact that I was forced to have Havelock Ellis to myself for two hours and with equanimity the fact that return to the country on the same day prevented my meeting her somewhere the following afternoon.

There was no disappointment: I would gladly travel farther on such a quest. But of course, the suggestion was never put point-blank. It was thrown out that pressing business of supreme importance called me to London, and that having an hour or so to spare, if he were disengaged, I might perhaps drop in. One is obliged to conform to the funny conventions of what is important and of what is unimportant, though "yes" or "no" over the telephone will transact all business of mine perfectly. Perhaps on this occasion the agreeable myth had been, for conviction's sake, a little elaborated and several

none: found only such refreshing pride in the fact of being a woman that the accident of being a great reformer was neglected, or treated, when its shadow appeared on the horizon, as a subject fit rather for smiling apology than for any complacency.

HER words were clothed in genuine feeling, beautifully clad. She meant what she said. There was nothing assumed in her graciousness; it was simple and deep as her laughter. The graciousness that comes from a perfect manner is good so far as it goes—oil to the wheels of life; this graciousness is better, however, giving food to the spirit. It is less a manner than a miracle.

Shared shyness and shared laughter melted the barriers: shared admiration (though adoration would be perhaps the truer term) for the work of Havelock Ellis offered the link of friendship. Her life-work, it was confessed with joy, was but a little off-shoot from that work: her effort, as it were, to give reality to his dream: his spiritual child. Her work did not lose in importance as I realized the beautiful truth of this quality glowed from such candor; strength from such honesty. One's mind played with Craslow's lines:

"Till that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh through which to shine."

The finest of a human being's quality I believe to be the power of appreciation. Under the beneficent influence of her appreciation all one's little effort to create a life from the raw material (not always kind material) of circumstance seemed worthwhile: all one loved, in the light of her appreciation, became dearer. Encouragement came from her like the smell from a flower and sweetened the air you breathed in her presence. In true greatness there is nothing alarming; still less, with all due deference to politicians and publicists, anything pompous: but rather something deeply gracious, deeply quickening.

From this dear genuineness her great work shone out in all its life and beauty, confirming my belief that the deed is of small importance compared with the human doer of the deed.

On her banner is inscribed what at first sight appears a merely negative and obviously necessary measure — Birth Control: a measure so obviously necessary that only a man or woman blinded by prejudice or hardened by custom, could fail to realize its significance, but yet a measure without inspiration. In her hands, however, the theme loses its dreary

days had been mentioned as the necessary time for my business, so that my visit might appear even more casual than usual, the wish to see him being certainly stronger.

This no doubt reacted pleasantly upon Margaret Sanger, as she was constrained by my absence to spend the time, booked to be spent with a stranger, with a friend. Thus all things may be said to work together for good for those.

IN the safety of the country I penned a letter of regret, sincere enough, for I was sorry (with reservations at what the two of us had mutually gained thereby) not to meet any friend of Havelock Ellis. In the safety of the country my courage (to give it a kind name) rose to the pitch of suggesting that she should come down and spend a week-end with us—hoping, of course, that her many engagements would permit her the pleasure. Not without some surprise I received a letter accepting the invitation: not without some trepidation I met the train by which she was to arrive.

Shared shyness and shared laughter melted barriers of personal dignity which are apt to be stiff and insuperable between human beings who are too advanced to be shy and too majestic for laughter. Her laughter put me more quickly at my ease than the clearest speech could possibly have done. Her laughter was simple and quiet and infectious.

All one's prawn's whiskers of sensibility were alert for any trace of self-importance which crushes, and found

negative quality. The movement becomes a rallying ground for creative effort, which is for ever working to free mankind from the oppression of outworn modes of thought; and above all, working to put freedom within the reach of the mothers of the race: so that women may grow to the full stature of their natures and no longer be pinned down by ignorance and fear and superstition to the paltry idea of what a woman ought to be. With her freedom comes the freedom of her lovers and of her children. Humanity itself rises.

Margaret Sanger is living the dream of a poet like Shelly whose vision foresaw her; bringing by her genius his dream into the actual life of the world.

And women too, frank, beautiful and kind,
As the free heaven which rain's fresh light
and dew
On the wide earth, passed: gentle, radiant
forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure,
Speaking the wisdom once they could not
think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared
not be,
Yet being now made earth like heaven.

So on that first visit when she curled up in a rug on the lawn and went to sleep, the home in which such a woman could also be at home to sleep at ease, received sanction for its existence.

Many earnest people hold laughter suspect; by doing so they show their ignorance of the full fire of earnestness which can never exist without laughter. A memory rises of a small woman lying fully

dressed on the top of her made bed in a Nursing Home: just able to speak, little else. "They write frantically, thinking I'm sure to die!" Laughter shook her too much for her state of feebleness. "I'm afraid I shan't. The stupid old cause won't let me go."

Doctors, nurses, friends urged the wild rashness of sailing on the next day for America. But with no crossness of refusal, almost apologetic for what she termed her obstinacy, she adhered to her plan. On the train journey to her boat her voice entirely went: she wrote a laughing message that the friend seeing her off would be obliged to label her like a parcel.

IN little ways is greatness of purpose exhibited.

Often one hears a famous singer who uses the music to display her own technical accomplishment in performing it; the gifts too and graces of her personality. She receives the applause of the vulgar, but the spirit of music departs from her. Occasionally, once or twice in a generation, there comes a true artist who feels honored to be the instrument through whom the music may come to life. To such a one her gift of voice, her technical accomplishment have little importance. Her love of the music leaves no room for love of self. From her the spirit of music never departs, but seeks ever closer communion.

Such an artist is Margaret Sanger in the great art of life. Such a worker is she at her cause. Her presence confers a blessing on the generation in which she lives. A merely negative, an obviously necessary measure becomes at her touch

a great educative force to let loose love from the bondage of custom, like light among humanity. On hundreds and thousands her name alone confers a blessing and will remain a blessing. By sinking herself whole-heartedly and completely in her cause, she illustrates a truth too often forgotten, that above every cause, above every measure, above every custom rises for ever the divine creative force of human personality.

One beautiful sign of a strong nature is gratitude. Every February number of the *Birth Control Review* is a birthday number in honor of Havelock Ellis. Of the whole movement he is proudly acknowledged and truly acknowledged to be 'the only begetter.' Love of his work and personality grows and deepens as understanding grows. The cumulative power of these birthday numbers has done more to spread the good influence of his work than can easily be recognized. Rarely has the infection of generous love been more richly illustrated: rarely have Thoreau's inspired words received such an exquisite example — words which should never be forgotten:

"A base friendship is of a narrowing and exclusive tendency, but a noble one is not exclusive; its very superfluity and dispersed love is the humanity which sweetens society and sympathises with foreign nations; for though its foundations are private, it is in effect a public affair and a public advantage and the friend more than the father of a family deserves well of the State."

Margaret Sanger's work is vital and educative as only that work can ever be which is 'dispersed love,' the flower and the fruit of Friendship.

A Foreign View-Point

By Harriette Hifton King

A NEW French book, "Les Feministes Francaises,"* is frankly an effort to enlighten the French general public on the question of feminism which it has ignored or known only superficially. The author has assiduously studied the current women's magazines and especially *Eve* which "deals with other subjects besides beauty recipes and jazz bands—from the most insignificant to the most elevated"—and insists that it is time the French people awake to a realization of the significance of the new movement which he does his best to understand but of which he himself seems to have grave doubts.

The title-page itself is significant and reflects the continuing governmental fear

of decreasing population due to women's movements. It reads: "Not theories, but facts. *The French Feminists*. All which the public should know in its own interest: Why French women do not wish to vote; Their opinions on love, marriage, religion, politics, etc., collected at random during 18 months. Feminist proposals: A dry France (prohibition); closing of houses of prostitution (gynecées); house-keeping and sewing to be taught also to boys; prison for certain maladies, etc., etc. The new duty of the French woman elector may be exacted: Maternity or military service; Single women engaged in the sports (Les Sportives celibataires) could take the place in the army of certain fathers of families."

We mention the book, not because it agrees with Equal Rights, since the author affirms in his last chapter that "The principle of equality of the sexes is the Trojan horse of feminism," but because it is good for us at least to know what our cousins across the water think and read. We have protagonists and antagonists round the world!

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* "Les Feministes Francaises," by Fernando Gland (pseudonym for Guillaume Belso), 344 pp. 12. Editions Francais; 109, Faubourg Poissonniere, Paris (IX), 1925.