

Equal Rights

VOL. XII, No. 37
FIVE CENTS

SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 24, 1925



National Photos.

Members of the Advisory Council of the National Woman's Party on the steps of the Headquarters on Capitol Hill. From left to right, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence of England, Mme. Hoda Charaoui of Egypt, Mme. Ceza Nabaraoui of Egypt, all members of the International Advisory Council of the National Woman's Party, and Mrs. Elizabeth Culbertson of Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Feminist Notes

French Women Aviators

FRANCE is said to have more women aviators than any other country in the world.

Argentine Women Gain

ARGENTINE women, heretofore unable to contract business without their husbands' consent, have been given civil rights equivalent to men's.

Helps Other Women

A BOSTON real estate woman who has already made a fortune has gone into the business of "backing" young women who need financial aid in their business ventures, the press reports.

Wants Work for Women

THE Secretary of the Interior of Cuba, Rogerio Zayas Bazan, wants women to have full opportunities for engaging in the nation's commerce, he recently told the Cuban Chamber of Commerce.

"This should be done," the secretary said, "not only in obeying Cuban laws, but also in response to the current progress of civilized nations which have fomented universal expansion of women's activities in economic mediums, to maintain life without sinking into vice or criminality."

Candidate for Mayor

FRANCES G. CURTIS is the first woman candidate for mayor of Boston. Miss Curtis has been on the school committee for thirteen years.

Invents Machine

THE machine which permits manufacturers to turn out a horseshoe every three minutes was invented by a woman.

Radio Station Owned by Woman

THE only known radio station owned and operated by a woman was licensed recently. Mary M. Costigan of Flagstaff, Arizona, is the owner, and her station is described as "50 watts power and wave length of 205.4."

Had to Wear Veil

A CAT may look at a king, but a king may not look upon a woman ruler of India. Therefore when the aged Begum of Bhopal, India's only woman ruler, visited the King and Queen of England at Buckingham Palace recently, she was heavily veiled. The Begum is ruler of more than 1,000,000 persons in the Kingdom of Bhopal.

Chilean Poet in League of Nations

GABRIELA MISTRAL, principal of the Teachers' Training College of Santiago, Chile, and eminent poet, has been appointed head of the Literary Relations Section of the International Institution for Intellectual Co-operation, opened in Paris under the auspices of the League of Nations. Miss Mistral is the only woman to be appointed chairman of a section. Miss Hocking of England is in charge of the records.

Problems of Industry

AMONG the problems of the woman in industry discussed at the recent conference of nineteen representatives of different trades, straight from their factory work benches, were: Legislation affecting women in industry; legislation in foreign countries, particularly action of the International Labor Bureau; education to arouse group consciousness with regard to the woman in industry, her place in society, her attitude toward her own work, and her place in the world; the problems of the married woman in industry; and education for unity among women in industry, regardless of nationality or race.

Women Bankers Want Equality

WOMEN bankers have indicated that they do not want to be a special division of the American Bankers' Association. They do want, however, equal standing in the association, and appointments as committee members and speakers on the programs of the association. This was indicated at the meeting of the Association of Bank Women in Boston.

At this meeting a plea for the elimination of competition between men and women was made by Doris Stevens of the National Council of the National Woman's Party. Miss Stevens urged, at the annual banquet of the association, that complete understanding founded on kindness and absence of fear.

"Women themselves have co-operated in erecting false barriers against their own progress," she said, "but that is no reason to permit their continuance. Distinguish woman's achievements, honor her enterprises, reward her services. If enlightened opinion were as keen to reward her for intellectual aspirations as unenlightened opinion is to dramatize her failures, we should get on more rapidly. Women still perform work without pay. The home is the only enterprise upon which two partners embark without financial arrangements satisfactory to both."

The Profession of Housekeeping

PROPOSING to raise the status of housekeeping to a profession, as Florence Nightingale raised the status of sick-nursing to professional standing, Ann Pope is organizing a British Housewives' Association. "We could open another profession for women," Miss Pope says, "and relieve the overstocked occupations."

Woman to Meet Oxford

VIVIAN SIMPSON, a member of the Students' Council of the National Woman's Party, is the first woman to win a place on the George Washington University debating team. The team, composed of Miss Simpson and two men, will meet the Oxford University team in Washington, D. C., on November 2. Miss Simpson is a law student.

Texas Woman to Run for Governor

EDITH WILLIAMS, former representative from Dallas County in the Texas Legislature, has announced that she will be a candidate for Governor next year to succeed Governor Miriam A. Ferguson, Texas' first woman Governor.

Achievement Award

CORA WILSON STEWART of Rowan County, Kentucky, has been awarded the annual \$5,000 prize for 1924 given by the *Pictorial Review* as "an annual achievement award for women." Mrs. Stewart founded the "moonlight schools" in the Kentucky mountains to eliminate illiteracy, and has worked elsewhere in the campaign for literacy.

Indians Choose Woman to Head Congress

SAROJINI NAIDU, a poet, has been chosen by the Indian National Congress to be president of the forthcoming session in Cawnpore in December. Mrs. Naidu is the first Indian woman chosen to head this congress.

Both Seek Alimony

AN unusual divorce case must be decided by Judge Lewis of Chicago. Victoria Van Alen Smith brought suit for divorce against Cornelius Van Alen Smith, and asked alimony based on her husband's \$100,000 estate and his annual income of \$25,000. In answering her suit, Mr. Smith set up the claim that, due to his expert management of his wife's estate, her property had increased in value from \$150,000 to \$600,000, and asks that, in case the divorce is granted, he be awarded "a fair and equitable share" in his wife's estate.

"A Living Center of Union"

NOT least of the results which come from any united effort for equality such as was undertaken by the National Woman's Party during the Interparliamentary Union is the sense of solidarity which develops therefrom, and the stimulation of interest both in those who have long worked for Equal Rights and in those who have only recently joined in the concentrated and definite movement toward equality. Letters received at National Headquarters following the Interparliamentary Union show these effects vividly.

From Muna Lee, American poet and wife of the Porto Rican author, Luis Muñoz Mariñ, comes a letter indicative of a keen and purposeful interest stirred into immediate activity by the lobby for worldwide equality maintained by the Woman's Party. Señora Munoz translated for a recent Spanish-American number of *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*, poems written by modern poets of fourteen nations from Mexico to Chile, and is widely known throughout the Spanish-American countries. She spoke with members of the parliaments of these countries, urging their support of Equal Rights during the conference of the Interparliamentary Union.

In a letter to Miss Paul, Miss Lee, or Senora Muñoz, said:

"May I express my deep sense of the privilege which I feel it to be associated with the work of the Woman's Party? My wholly casual, and—as it seemed—inconsequential trip to Washington seems to me now to have been one of the most important events in my life. I do not mean that hitherto I had been blind to women's problems—they had always loomed darkly in my consciousness—but that I had seen no solution for them. The sense that they may be solved, and that our generation can hasten the solution, means a very great deal. And I have to thank you for that.

"Please remember that I consider myself under orders."

FROM Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, long a worker for the equality which the Woman's Party purposes to work for till universally established, comes a beautiful letter showing particularly the value of the permanent center for the Equal Rights movement established through the generosity of the President of the National Woman's Party, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont:

"My dear Alice Paul:

"Your farewell on the platform was like your greeting of welcome, and every day of my stay was filled with the same spirit; so that my heart is full of love and appreciation and I hardly know how to express it simply enough. That week was really a great experience, and yet it was so quiet. There seemed something

Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind

THE *Vote*, weekly paper of the Women's Freedom League of England, protests in the following editorial the failure of the Anglo-American Society to commemorate the Pilgrim Mothers when they raised a monument to the Pilgrim Fathers near the spot from which the Pilgrims sailed in search of religious liberty:

"* * * * But why did no one mention the Pilgrim Mothers? The Pilgrim Fathers did not go alone to America, and the women of the two countries have as much concern as the men in the links of friendship which bind Great Britain and the United States in a friendship which we all keenly desire to be everlasting. Whenever there is a struggle for religious liberty or political liberty in any country, the women share fully with the men the hardships of that struggle, yet we hear very little of the women's part in it when that struggle has ended in victory. Puritans of both sexes were persecuted in the time of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts. So intolerable was life in England for these Nonconformists that, in 1607, a large number of men, with their wives and children, hired a ship to take them to Holland. The shipmaster failed

to keep the appointment, and on a second attempt, when they secured a ship, they were betrayed by its master, put in open boats and taken ashore, 'their persons, even those of the women, being searched with gross indignities, and their possessions all taken from them'—so we are told by the old chronicler. It is also stated that they were carried back into the town of Boston (Lincolnshire) through inquisitive crowds, and subsequently taken before the magistrates and kept in jail a whole month. In 1608, another attempt was made to get to Holland. On this occasion the Dutch captain took the men on board, the women and children having been put on a small vessel the previous day. The weather was very stormy; they were all ill; and these women had to be brought back. Deprived of their husbands and their homes, they were in a pitiable plight. Not knowing what else to do, the authorities imprisoned them. They appear to have been rather a handful, and were soon afterwards released; but as they were destitute, and made much lamentation for their husbands and fathers, the authorities were only too glad to get rid of them by shipping them off

going on under the surface, something that made for trust and confidence and harmony and that found expression in 'deeds not words.' I felt absolutely at home in every sense of that expression. Accept my thanks, as once more I clasp your hands. I rejoice with deep thankfulness to life itself that there should be anywhere in the world such a living center of union and fellowship amongst women. I do not think of it primarily as sex but as human fellowship. All the world ought to live as you and your friends live in that community house,—so beautiful and spacious. Then we should have creative work done from the impulse of love, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and a condition of harmonious peace. It was a joy to me to meet all these living people. I could mention them all by name, for each of them gave me something unique—so different from most settlements and communities where the stranger and the guest feels like an animal of another species, and though royally entertained by the management, never dreams of being taken into the circle as 'one of us.' It was all a delight. To tell you the truth, all this 'joy-riding' in herds is nothing but a weariness of the flesh to me, whereas one real human contact is life-giving. "Much love to you and warmest greetings to all—

"Ever yours,

(Signed)

"EMMELINE PETHICK-LAWRENCE."

It is thus that the movement grows in power by the stimulus radiated from every concentrated action.

to Holland. When the Mayflower set sail for America, July 22, 1620, there were 102 people on board, among these being twenty-four wives, seven daughters, and one maidservant. The daughters and the maidservant appear to have survived not only the genuine hardships of the voyage, but also the no less real hardships of the first few years after their settlement in America; but fourteen of the twenty-four wives died before the end of 1621. The Pilgrims cast anchor in Provincetown Harbor, November 21, 1620 (old style, November 11), and on that day signed a civil compact as loyal subjects of King James, agreeing 'to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony.' This compact was signed by forty-one men—no woman's name being among the signatures. In those days it was not usual to give women public recognition, but we think it inexcusable on the part of the men who were at the unveiling of the Memorial on the Humber last week to forget to acknowledge the part which the Pilgrim Mothers played in the cause of religious liberty."

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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 Female Mind

MANY there are who yearn for youth and who await the coming of inevitable years with the same shuddering reluctance that they approach a grave. White hair, a wrinkled skin, declining vigor, all of the signs and symbols of old age, fill them with horror in association with themselves. A pity, for when viewed aright old age is the most interesting of all life's seasons.

Added to the day's experiences when one is old is the perspective which alone sets events in their true order. To a young thing, for instance, it means little to read in the daily press that Ettalene Mears Grice, Ph.D., has been promoted to be assistant professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature and acting curator of the Babylonian collection to succeed the late Rev. Albert Tobins Clay at Yale University. To a Feminist of three score years and ten or upwards Dr. Grice's appointment on the contrary will provide food for thought of a most delectable variety for days on end. This all because no occurrence can be appreciated without its proper background. Only those women who are old enough today to recall the vexed discussions as to the capacities of "the female mind" which took place fifty years ago when they were (or were not) entering college can fully enjoy the fact of Dr. Grice's promotion.

Think of it—to have been told, solemnly and by dignified men that "the female mind" was incapable of assimilating Greek, Latin and the higher mathematics, and then to witness a female mind holding down a post at a men's university in Assyriology and Babylonian Literature! Certainly the bloom of youth is of small merit in comparison with such a moment. It is enough to make the very spheres shake in their orbits with celestial laughter, and yet the undergraduates of today, poor things, take it all for granted. Let us who are older not pity them too much, however, for in their time they too may witness Feminist jests that are commensurate. O. B. W.

Making the Balance True

CONSIDERABLE resentment is, first and last, phrased against the National Woman's Party's policy of supporting qualified women for public office just because they are women. The whole object of the Feminist movement, it is claimed, is to eliminate sex as a determinative factor in opportunity and service and to substitute actual merit for sex-linked prejudice as a standard of preference.

"You are doing exactly what anti-feminists have always done," say our critics, "but in the reverse direction. They have preferred men just because they were men and now you wish to do the same for women. We shall vote for the best candidates regardless of sex and thereby vindicate Feminism."

As a matter of verbal theory we admit without question that the stand taken by our critics is fair, just, and entirely reasonable. But at the same time we adhere firmly to our original premise for the following reasons:

It is an obvious fact that the native ability of the human race is divided more or less evenly between the two sexes, yet our law-making assemblies are almost exclusively masculine. In public office where the post is of any significance men are consistently given preference over women, with the result that the whole mechanism of government is dominated by the interests of one sex to the exclusion of the other's.

Now whether we wish to admit it or not, the fact remains that the fundamental interests of men and women in our own era are frequently at variance. Business for example desires to keep the tax rate down, mothers demand better schools for their children. Women sense the need for a Federal child labor law, manufacturers prefer a free hand in employing children. Property, perhaps reluctantly, realizes that war is sometimes the only adequate means for its protection, while motherhood knows that human life is more precious than all the wealth of Indes. So it goes—because they are men and because they are women they put the stress differently.

We too believe in voting for the best candidates and in having all public offices filled by the most capable individuals, but we have a conviction that when this desideratum is achieved and the best have been chosen, about half will be men and the other half women. We urge the selection of qualified women, just because they are women, to make the balance true, to offset latent dominant prejudice, for we believe that only through a new and conscious sex solidarity on the part of women can a harrowed world have back what it most needs—the humanizing influence of its mother.

Egypt to America

Egypt is the twelfth foreign country to be represented on the International Advisory Committee of the National Woman's Party. During her recent visit to her daughter, Mme. Samy Pasha, wife of the Egyptian minister to the United States, Mme. Hoda Charaoui Pasha, the leading feminist of Egypt, joined the Woman's Party, and became a member of the International Committee.

Mlle. Ceza Nabaraoui, another feminist leader of Cairo, also became a member of the committee. Mme. Charaoui is the president of the Feminist Union of Egypt, founded three years ago, and is also president of a national federation of women's clubs. Mlle. Nabaraoui is secretary of the Feminist Union, and editor of the feminist magazine, *L'Egyptienne*.

Mme. Charaoui and Mlle. Nabaraoui, both beautiful and charming women, were guests at the tea given on October 4 for the women delegates to the Interparliamentary Union. They became deeply interested in the work for Equal Rights, and immediately joined the Woman's Party. On the following Tuesday, at the invitation of Alice Paul, they came to National Headquarters to confer on the international work. They consented to address a meeting held at tea on Thursday, October 8.

The Egyptian feminists came to the tea on Thursday dressed in their national costume, with veils, which Mlle. Nabaraoui said had ceased to signify a cloistered and restricted life, and were worn—she laughed—"only because we think they are becoming." The veils conceal no part of the face, covering only the hair and being caught under the chin.

Mme. Charaoui addressed the guests at the tea in French, and Mlle. Nabaraoui interpreted her address in English as follows:

"Madame the President, and Ladies—or, rather, let me call you by that sweet name, My Dear Sisters, as we do it in our country. In Egypt we rarely say *Madame*, or *Mademoiselle*, alone. Between women of the same age the greeting is 'My Sister,' and the young girls call their mothers' friends 'My Aunt.' For example, you may have heard Mlle. Nabaraoui calling me 'Aunt.' I am not her aunt by blood relationship, but her mother was one of my dearest friends.

"Don't you believe, ladies, that these salutations answer better for the need that one feels everywhere to establish an era of fraternity and universal peace?"

"The conditions of life and the feelings of peoples are not so different as to create insurmountable boundaries preventing a good understanding between nations. Dis-

tances even are no longer an obstacle to their drawing nearer, thanks to the new means of communication.

"Until these days it was permitted to ignore people of other continents, but today the facilities of traveling are so great it is nearly unpardonable to ignore our other brothers of the human race.

"The creative genius of this organization, Miss Paul, understood this when she formed an International Council beside the National Council of the Party. I can only congratulate her for that excellent initiative, and hope that she will be followed by groups of women in all the countries of the world.

"In that way we shall know each other better, and the prejudices of races will exist no more. Each one will judge by what he sees, and not by what he hears.

"What have we not heard about American women! They were described to us as the most eccentric, inconstant, and capricious women of the world. I am glad to say that I have been able to learn that this reputation was false. On the contrary, the American woman can be considered the most active, intelligent, and well-informed woman in public life.

"And you, ladies—what have you not heard about the Egyptian woman! They must have painted us to you in the most unfavorable or fantastic light according to the prejudices or the imagination of some authors fonder of romantics than of truth.

"By what I shall tell you you will be able to judge that the Oriental woman is not so different from the Occidental woman, especially nowadays when she is freeing herself from the old customs which were keeping her outside the social life of her nation, and showing her in the most mysterious way.

"THE veil, though very light, was the greatest obstacle to the participation of woman in active life. According to the custom, the girl of 11 or 12 was to be veiled and removed from school. Insufficiently educated, she believed easily what was told to her, that the veil was a religious obligation prescribed by the Koran, and she resigned herself to that seclusion.

"It is only in 1900 that the voice of a man—our first Feminist in Egypt—Kassim Bey Amin, author of two books, 'The Emancipation of Woman' and 'The New Woman' was raised against that unjust situation.

"I cannot tell you all that great man has suffered for having braved public opinion and pleaded so warmly our cause.

"This generous defense had for result the opening of women's eyes and even

those of some of the progressive men. The Koran verse on which men were depending for the maintenance of the veil was addressed only to the wives of the prophets. It is written nearly thus:

"O WIVES of Prophets, you are not like other women. Remain in your houses and do not adorn yourselves like women of the days before Islam. Show your attire only to your husband. It is better and more worthy of you."

"This verse explains the origin of the veil after Islam. When the prophets' wives obeyed that order and withdrew and veiled themselves, other women by imitation, or to obey their husbands, followed their example.

"On that subject I shall tell you a small anecdote which was the cause in Egypt of women's not frequenting the mosques any more, contrary to the custom in the other Mohammedan countries. Till the Caliphate of Omar, women used to pray in the mosques. But the Caliph, being very jealous in character, said one day to his wife, 'Why do you go to the mosque? You can as well pray to God in your own house.' But she did not share his opinion, and replied, 'Would you like to forbid what the Prophet himself has permitted?'"

"Seeing that she was right, he tried a stratagem which was successful. On Friday he concealed himself behind the exit door of the mosque and pinched his wife as she passed. She became indignant at that disrespect, and not knowing the author of it, did not go any more to the mosque. Omar having asked her the reason of her abstention from prayer in the mosque, she replied, 'I used to go when men knew how to behave toward women and respected them.'

"Women of Egypt following that example ceased also to frequent the mosque, and that custom has been perpetuated in our country till our day.

"Now the custom of the veil begins to disappear little by little from all the countries of the East. In Turkey the women all are beginning to wear hats. If in our country the veil does not disappear so quickly, it is because women like to keep it as a national costume, now that it is no longer an obstacle to the advancement of women. I wore it today so that you could judge yourselves how it is fitting and convenient.

"Several of you have asked me what kind of costume we wear at home. I regret to have to disappoint you in telling you that the rich in Egypt are dressed by the great designers of Paris, and the others are dressed nearly as smartly by our dressmakers of Cairo, whose models come from Paris.

"NOW that we have talked enough about the veil and our costume, let us enter into the harem that some people believe to be so terrible and mysterious. Let me tell you first the meaning of harem. It means *the place of women*, as the gynaeceum in Ancient Greece was the private apartment of women. It is understood that when women were concealed from men, it was necessary to have a special side of the house reserved to men. That place, called 'salamlik,' was a reception room for the master of the house.

"The word *harem* awakes immediately in the mind the image of polygamy. Polygamy has for a long time been practised in countries of Islam on account of the wars. For that custom, as in the case of the veil, men have interpreted the Koran prescription according to their interest, and it is also Kassem Amin who attracted general attention to that point. The Koran says, it is true, a man can take two, three, or four wives on the condition that he can treat and love them equally, but if he fears he will be unable to be so just, he should take only one, and it is further added, 'You will never be able to be equitable towards them all, in spite of all your efforts.' That is quite as if it had been said, 'Marry only one.' And for that reason we did not have to derogate the Koran law when we asked the abolition of polygamy among the demands presented to parliament.

"Besides, this custom is disappearing every day, and is now practised only by the poorer class. In Turkey the Angora assembly has already abolished it.

"In our country marriage has not a religious character. It is only a civil contract between the two parties before witnesses. It is thus possible that each of the parties can stipulate what he wishes. The dowry is paid by the husband according to his fortune. Two-thirds of it is paid at the signature of the contract,

and the remainder is to be paid if there is a divorce or by his heirs at the husband's death.

"As to divorce, it is generally the man who uses this right, but woman can use it also if she asked for that right in her marriage contract.

"A woman inherits half as much as a man. That is because the husband, whatever may be his wife's fortune, is obliged to provide for her and her children. She enjoys the same right as man in administering her own property. She can sell or mortgage her property without her husband's consent.

"No civil law prevents her from entering a profession or a trade. She has equal pay for equal work. Our women employed in the government as teachers or inspectors get the same salary as men teachers and inspectors.

"THOUGH she is privileged by the law, woman has for many centuries been ignorant of her rights. But now, thanks to education first; to the courage of the first feminists, to Kassem Amin of whom I have spoken; and to Bahsat el Bodia, a distinguished woman author who presented ten demands concerning women's rights to the Egyptian Congress in 1911, which were then rejected; thanks especially to the national movement of 1919, in which Egyptian women took a great part, woman in Egypt has become aware of herself, and now understands the part she can play in society and in the future destinies of her country.

"With the aim of serving her country, she despised the ancient prejudices which kept her subjugated, broke their claims, participated courageously in the general fight for the independence of Egypt. Many of those women have found death in their heroism."

Mme. Charaoui and Mlle. Nabaroui told later the story of the first time women ventured to walk on the streets, un-

aided by chairs or carriages. The women wanted to make a Nationalist demonstration by visiting all the foreign legations in a body, asking their support for Egypt's independence.

Armed, as a poet celebrating the event said, "With only palm branches and the flower of the jasmine," they "vanquished" the cordon of armed English soldiers which surrounded them. They then went on with their demonstration—their "manifestation" as Mlle. Nabaroui said—and walked from legation to legation under the burning sun, setting a precedent that women have since followed in going about as they pleased.

"Since that time," Mme. Charaoui continued, "men, amazed by the courage, the capacity, and the patriotism of women, no longer opposed their evolution. They at last understand that no nation can get complete emancipation if its women are not enfranchised."

The Feminist Union has therefore had great encouragement from the men, and four months after it made its first demands to the parliament, it won two points—the raising of the marriage age to 16 for girls and to 18 for boys; and the establishment of schools providing equal education for girls and boys, but in separate schools. They have asked that women teachers be put in charge of the girls' schools, and have been promised places for women who will fit themselves for the positions.

Mme. Charaoui ended her talk with an expression of her joy in being able to cooperate with American women and women of eleven other countries in the world-wide movement to end the world-wide subjection of women.

Mrs. Cyrus Mead of Dayton, Ohio, presided at the tea, and headed the receiving line. Mrs. Mead told of the aims and the program of the National Woman's Party, and of the organization of the International Advisory Committee.

English Women and Intestacy

AN important step in the emancipation of English women will be made January 1, 1926, when the Administration of Estates Act, 1925, goes into effect. Under the new act the preference of males over females in the descent of real estate is abolished. The age-long reign of primogeniture is abolished, and sons and daughters, males and females, rank equally in the distribution of the real property of an intestate. The widow acquires exactly the same rights in her husband's estate as the husband has in estate of an intestate wife. The old practice of treating a husband and wife as one person is here definitely abandoned. A father and mother are also placed on an equality in

the case where a man dies intestate and without issue in the lifetime of his parents.

The Vote, organ of the Women's Freedom League, says of this new act giving equality:

"The progress gained, especially by women, when the new act comes into operation, may be better gauged by reference to the present and past position of women under intestacy. Under the rule of primogeniture, real property (estates or interests in land amounting to freehold) has invariably passed to the eldest son, or heir-at-law, all younger children of either sex being ignored. Again, if a wife dies without making a will, the

husband can claim the whole of her personal estate, passing over any children there may be of the marriage; but if the cases are reversed and the husband dies intestate, the widow is only entitled to one-third, the remainder going to the children. In the case, too, where a person dies intestate and leaves no issue, but has parents still living, the father may take the whole residuary estate; but the mother has no such title.

"The bearing of the new act upon the marriage relationship in this country is likely to be immensely far-reaching, and will undoubtedly knock one more nail into the familiar adage that a husband and wife are one person."

Equal Rights in the Legislatures of 1925

By Emma Wold
Legislative Secretary, National Woman's Party

LAWS giving mothers the same rights as fathers, wives the same rights as husbands, women the same rights as men, were not so numerous enacted by the State legislatures meeting in 1925 as to induce great rejoicing among women seeking equality in the laws, or to alarm those who deprecate the biennial deluge of new laws on this or any other subject. Every little movement toward the removal of the old legal theories of distinction between the sexes and between married and unmarried women appears to have had a meaning of its own to legislators—usually a fearsome meaning. Women have, therefore, been sent away in despair from the legislative halls where they have asked for the consideration of subjects of special interest to them; in a despair that will not, however, deter them from importuning the next legislatures of their States on the same subjects.

During the year, forty-two State legislatures have sat in regular sessions. What women have gained in the removal of barriers affecting their domestic, political, and social relations may be quickly told.

California gave mothers the same right as fathers to name by will a guardian for the children, the new law conferring this right upon the surviving parent instead of, as heretofore, upon the father.

In Delaware a mother now has the same right to inherit personal property from her child as the father has. The right of inheritance of real property by the two parents was equalized in 1923. In this State, also, a law was enacted making a married woman, and not her husband, liable for damages caused by her negligence. The legislators regarded this as a measure of justice to husbands. The women who asked for it look upon it as a recognition of the separate individuality of the wife, a long-delayed promotion from the class of creatures like a vicious dog or errant pig for whose harmful acts an owner is responsible.

In Iowa a constitutional amendment making women eligible for election to the legislature was approved and will be submitted to the vote of the people in November, 1926.

New Jersey has forbidden discriminations based on sex among teachers. This measure was passed by the legislature over the governor's veto.

New York removed from its statutes a specific direction to courts appointing administrators of estates that males should be preferred to females.

Pennsylvania adopted the principle of the equality of the father and mother in the right of guardianship of the children by giving the mother equal right to their custody and services, and a joint right of action for injuries to them, and by

granting to the surviving parent the right of appointing a guardian by will. The law on the appointment of administrators of estates was made the same for the estate of a deceased husband or wife.

In South Carolina a married woman may now sue without the joinder of her husband, a recognition of her separate identity.

In Texas the right of a widow to administer the community property will hereafter not be completely extinguished on her re-marriage.

West Virginia equalized the dower right of the widow and the courtesy right of the surviving husband.

The bills adopted in California, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina were drafted by the Legal Department of the National Woman's Party, and were passed through the activity of the State branches of the Woman's Party and other women's organizations.

AGAINST these achievements in the campaign for equality by legislative action must be listed many failures. In thirteen States strenuous efforts were made to give women the right to serve on juries. Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota, all with like accord refused to allow bills on this subject to leave committee or defeated them on vote. In some States the chief opposition came from the bar; in others from the "wet" forces. The old argument that the presence of women on juries complicates the problem of quarters for a jury has lost its force since many States have made statutory provisions for a mixed jury.

(Note: After the defeat of jury service bills in Illinois, the question of the eligibility of women for such service was taken to the Superior Court which held that "women now are the peers of men," made "free men within the meaning of the common law" and therefore they are entitled to be placed on the jury rolls. An appeal has been taken by the jury commissioners to the State Supreme Court.)

In California the legislature defeated bills to raise the age of majority for girls to twenty-one as for boys, to prohibit difference in pay of public employees on the ground of sex, (this prohibition already applies to teachers), and to give the wife greater rights in the management of the common property of the marriage.

IN Colorado a general Equal Rights bill failed. In Delaware measures were lost for giving mothers the same rights as fathers to the custody, services and earnings of their children, for changing the rule that the legal residence of the wife is determined by that of the husband, and for giving a wife the right to recover all damages in case of her personal injuries and loss of ability to render services through the negligence of others.

In Michigan attempts to enlarge the contractual powers of a married woman, to abrogate her common-law disabilities, and to give the mother Equal Rights with the father in the services and earnings of their children met with defeat. In New Jersey a bill to give a married woman the right to recover all damages for her personal injuries and to sue for them in her own name was defeated.

In New York the legislature refused to equalize dower and curtesy rights. It refused also to give the mother equal or joint right with the father in the services and earnings of their children, or to give the wife the right to recover all damages for her personal injuries, or to have her legal residence determined as if she were a person and not a wife. The legislature also defeated a bill to make the man as well as the woman guilty in the offense of prostitution, a measure supported by men's groups as well as women's. A bill to make the father of a child born out of wedlock as responsible as though it were born in lawful marriage was lost. The uniform illegitimacy law that was enacted places on the father a larger responsibility than heretofore for the support of his illegitimate child, but does not give the child the right of inheritance from the father, as from the mother.

Ohio refused to accept the principle of equality when its legislature rejected bills prohibiting difference in pay for men and women teachers and public employees, a bill forbidding the denial of reappointment to a woman teacher on her marriage, and a bill to repeal the present statute excluding women from sixteen different occupations.

In Pennsylvania several bills to equalize the rights of husband and wife to mortgage or convey property and to give the wife greater contractual power failed. A measure giving a married woman the power to stand bail for another was defeated. The legislature also refused to extend the principle of the independent legal residence of a wife to cover other points besides voting and holding office, or to abolish the common law rule that the husband is the owner of his wife's services.

In Rhode Island an equal guardianship bill and a bill forbidding discriminations

between men and women teachers died in committee, and in South Carolina a similar teachers' bill was killed before reaching either house. In Texas, where the measure permitting a widow on remarriage to retain certain powers in the management of the common property of her former marriage was adopted with an eloquent legislative flourish about the equality of men and women, a bill calling for an equal number of men and women on political party committees was defeated.

Vermont rejected a bill equalizing the age of majority for boys and girls. West Virginia refused to equalize the male and female right of inheritance. Wisconsin failed to repeal a statute by which women are excluded from legislative clerkships.

Thus it is seen that in only nine States was any positive advance toward equality made in 1925 while in many States the efforts of women to remove by specific bills the legal ills under which they live were of no avail.

On the other hand, offenses against the principle of Equal Rights have not all

been negative. There are instances of positive infringements upon the principle in the addition of discriminations to the old statutes. For example, in Connecticut a measure was adopted declaring that the legal residence of a married woman is that of her husband, indicating that there had been some deviation from the common-law rule. In Maine, it was written into the law that a married woman must use her husband's surname in registering for elections.

Unsuccessful attempts to limit the rights of women also occurred. In Massachusetts a resolution to memorialize Congress to restrict the employment of married women was introduced. In Pennsylvania, a measure to exclude women over sixty-five from jury service passed both houses, but was vetoed by the governor, who apparently believes that women of that age make valuable jurymen.

Many of the Equal Rights measures listed above were drafted by the Legal Department of the National Woman's Party. One hundred and twenty-seven bills were prepared for submission to the

State legislatures. State branches of the organization succeeded in having thirty-nine of these introduced. Whether the enactment into law of nine out of thirty-nine bills is a fair ratio is not worth discussing. It is worth noting, however, that there are legislators who regard the consideration of women's special measures as a sort of gift to women, a legislative generosity which it is safe to make neither too large nor too free.

It is frequently asserted by those who disapprove of writing into the Federal Constitution the principle of equality for men and women that, since women have been granted political equality by federal provision, they will get whatever they want in civil or legal equality from their legislators. Work with legislators is showing women the fallacy of this gallant declaration. It is not that the work is prosaic; it is futile and ceaseless. Whether it is through Equal Rights or child welfare, the legislatures of 1925 have again taught women that it is not the justice or the merit of a cause that commands success.

Press Comment

Married Women in the Professions
New York Times

SMITH COLLEGE has set no easy task for itself in establishing an institute for the "co-ordination of woman's interests." Specifically the purpose of the institute, according to President Neilson, is:

To find a solution for the problem which confronts almost every educated woman today—how to reconcile a normal life of marriage and motherhood with a life of intellectual activity, professional or otherwise.

The professional aspect of the case is more difficult than the "otherwise." In intellectual activity not gainfully employed the educated American woman is not excessively hampered by marriage and motherhood. The market for intellectual wares is predominantly a woman's market. She reads most of our books, attends most of our better plays, fills the lecture halls and study clubs, and subscribes to the intellectualist magazines. As a consumer the American woman is not an intellectual drone. But as a producer the figures are suggestive. Out of slightly more than a million women professionally occupied in 1920, only 12.2 per cent. were married. We may put it another way. Out of 1,127,000 men in the professions in the same year, nearly 84 per cent. were over the age of 24. Of the women only 15 per cent. were over that age. Here is indubitable evidence that the demands and duties of the natural life pull six women out of seven back from the professions into the home.

Here the "solution," difficult and elusive at best, calls for numerous definitions. What is the "normal" life of marriage and motherhood today? Is it the detached dwelling and the kitchen, or the small apartment and the kitchenette and restaurants? Is it five children as in the good old days, or only two children as at present among our college graduates? It is obvious that by modernizing the definition of "normal life of wifehood and motherhood" we simplify the problem. A married woman with two children in an easily operated apartment and in the vicinity of good kindergarten and school and play-club facilities is appreciably nearer to escape from the burden of Eve.

That burden has been made heavier by stupid human prejudice and habit. Comparing, for instance, woman's job in the schoolroom with her job in industry, trade, or domestic wage service, it would seem that the woman teacher is most advantageously situated to combine gainful employment with marriage. The teacher's day is shorter than the laundry worker's or the shopwoman's, less arduous and mitigated by a long summer vacation. Yet the number of married women teachers in 1920 was 9.7 per cent., against 23.6 per cent. in trade, 24.5 per cent. in industry, 29.4 per cent. in domestic and personal service. Of women writers, 29.9 per cent. were married; chemists and similar pursuits, 26 per cent.; artists, 20 per cent.; women of the stage, 41 per cent. The woman teacher is, of course, victimized by the benighted law or prejudice against married women in the schoolroom.

Here is one concrete problem that can be attacked without delving into the imponderable factors of woman's life and lot.

No Longer Regarded as Oddities
London Times

MISS C. GRIFF, A. M. I. C. E., presided at the International Conference of Women in Science, Industry and Commerce at Wembley Exhibition recently and said in 1904 she was apparently the one female in England who wanted to study engineering. There was no opposition, because she was looked upon as such an extraordinary oddity that in the works where she was apprenticed they thought there never could be another such specimen. (Laughter.) A year or two later a girl at Liverpool University took the engineering degree and fled to Canada. (Laughter.) Today women scientists and engineers were able to hold good positions, both technical and executive, and they had in London an engineering works staffed by women and a steel company directed by women, and women writing scientific and technical papers. (Applause.) Women in science in the various branches were greatly in advance of women engineers.

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