

# The Council of Women

BY THE EDITOR

## THE COUNCIL OF WOMEN—WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

The value of any organization to the popular mind lies in what it does more than in what it aspires to be in a community, and any organization which cannot show a list of things attempted, if not accomplished, does not commend itself to the public generally for support or sympathy.

This, we believe, is one reason why that great world-wide organization known as the Council of Women is so much misunderstood and so little appreciated comparatively, and, as even at the present time there are many who do not yet quite understand what the Council of Women is, and who, if asked, could not give an intelligent or satisfactory reason for its existence even, perhaps a brief account of what this valuable body of workers is, might not be out of place.

The true greatness of an organization may be estimated, not by the measure of success it attains, but by the loftiness of its ideals and the purity of its aims and objects. And when those ideals are of the highest character, founded on the Law of Love, combined with aims and objects based on the unification of all that is best and noblest in human nature, then we may safely predict that, while these principles prevail, its work will be eternal and abiding, for while it is quite possible to do good, either as an individual or an organization without being good, it is not possible to be good without doing good. And so the work already achieved by the Council of Women is substantial in its character and lasting in its effects.

The Council itself consists of a large union of men and women workers, at present largely the latter, who are divided into federated societies, representing religion, philanthropy, social reform, literature, art, music, professions and educations in all its varied branches, pledged to unite on one common platform to uphold and protect all that is sacred and ennobling in the Home, purifying and elevating in the State and just and true in law.

It cannot be called sectarian, for it knows no sect, political for it has no politics, exclusive, for it is world wide, the only necessary qualification for membership being a desire to serve and help others and make this old world a happier and a brighter place to live in.

Owing to its representative nature it can have "no axe to grind," and, with rare exceptions, in the case of secretarial work, the time, the talents, and in many cases the wealth of the devoted women who hold office are given freely and generously, actuated alone by the spirit of love, service and self-renunciation.

This Utopian condition seems incredible in an age of gain, greed and graft, and is another reason why the work of the Council is viewed with suspicion by many. To them it is incomprehensible that a large body of women can employ periodically for the sole purpose of exempting "the union of all for the good of all," irrespective of creed and nationality, with no thought of self-interest or personal advancement, but when, in addition, they travel at their own expense many hundreds of miles to confer with one another upon vital questions relating to the well-being of the Family and the State, involving the destiny of nations and future of generations, then, indeed, it is well nigh impossible for the ordinary mind to sympathize with such altruistic principles or grasp the full meaning of such devotion.

The Council of Women is like a vast machinery plant, having always enough routine work on hand to keep it from becoming clogged or useless, and at the same time having in reserve sufficient power and force to enable it, when required, to spring into immediate and vigorous action, ensuring, under proper management the greatest output with the least expenditure of money, time or energy.

The work which has been done by the Council of Women is not easily tabulated, and therefore very much underestimated, for its policy, is to initiate work, not to carry it on, nor undertake any work which one of its Federated Societies can do better for which special object one could be called into existence.

The executive of the Local Council consists of representatives from all its federated societies, as well as the officers and conveners of standing committees. These constitute a strong central body typifying unity in diversity for on this committee are women of varied interests, who differ widely in thought, opinion and work, but who can meet as a solid co-operative body in that unity which is their strength, and without which effort would be useless, to redress wrongs and secure the greatest good for the greatest number. It is theirs to look around in a community and see what is needed to be done and do it, to see what is being overdone and save the waste of energy. They cannot actually build hospitals or endow churches or orphanages or champion the cause of one federated society to the exclusion of another, but it is their function to help all. Not indeed financially, for the Council has no funds excepting the small fees paid by societies, patrons, life and individual members, which just meet its running expenses, but by suggestion and advice when desired and by bringing to the notice of the public any pressing need in order to enlist greater interest and sympathy, ever holding itself in readiness to respond to special appeals and organize strong active committees to raise funds for any urgent cause with the consent of the Executive as a whole. Apart from this the Council cannot interfere with or dictate to any of its federated Societies and is not responsible for any action taken by them as separate bodies.

The work of the Council in the past has been largely one long catalogue of uncredited achievements—not intentionally so but because it has the habit, doubtfully commendable, of creating public opinion along any given line and bringing it to a point where action must follow and then stepping aside and allowing those who are aroused to "do the rest."

For instance, how many realize that owing to the strong resolution passed 21 years ago at the first meeting of the International Council of Women, preceded by years of thought and preparation, it was largely responsible for bringing about the first Peace Conference at The Hague.

Again, many years ago by bringing to the attention of the public the deplorable and unnecessary loss of life from consumption, the Council was instrumental in organizing a crusade against the Great White Plague, and the many Anti-Tuberculosis Societies in the world today are the direct result of the effort made by the pioneer women in this movement to save those who had fallen victims to, and were in danger of, this dread disease.

The standing Committee on Public Health is actively engaged in combatting conditions detrimental to it and such subjects as infant mortality, thorough inspection of Public Schools, pure food, pure milk and pure water supplies, better sanitation and housing of the poor and all preventive measures demand and receive constant attention.

The subject of Immigration is being carefully studied as one of the vital problems of a new country and many of the leading government officials do not hesitate to consult with the women of our Council who have made this work a specialty, regarding the many phases and side-issues of this important question, and it has been owing to their influence and efforts that trains and boats are now met and young immigrants receive friendly help and advice at a time when a wrong step might end in physical and moral ruin.

The Council has also devoted many years (for progress is slow) to matters that are too often overlooked, such as the classification of women in Prisons and Reformatories in order that those committed for a first offence should not be associated with others older in vice and crime, providing Police Matrons for female prisoners, the treatment and care of dependent and destitute as well as delinquent children for whom the Juvenile Courts are now being established with all their attendant advantages. The consideration of preventable causes of insanity, providing Women Inspectors of Factories and Workshops, who make it their business to see that the Factory Laws regarding women and children are enforced.

The system of Associated Charities, inaugurated by the Council, with its carefully planned methods, has to a great extent superseded the indiscriminate giving which only pauperizes the recipients but was frequently followed by a sympathetic if much imposed upon public.

In many places the Council has organized courses of lectures on hygiene, health talks to mothers, first aid to the injured, helped to solve the problem of "How to nurse the poor in their own Homes," by organizing a National District Nursing Corps known as The Victorian Order of Nurses and assisted in building cottage hospitals in isolated localities. It has also been active in providing day nurseries and creches for the help of those mothers who are unfortunately forced to leave home and children and go out to work by the day, and is constantly and systematically striving to protect young girls from influences and conditions which ought not to exist.

After years of patient effort it has been successful in getting domestic science and manual training introduced into the Public Schools of the Dominion as part of the curriculum, established Aberdeen Associations, public and school libraries, and owing to the vigilance of one of its Standing Committees has succeeded in having tons of impure and objectionable literature confiscated which had been brought into this country for vile purposes.

In fact it would be much more difficult to give a list of what it has not done than to attempt to tell of the work which has been helped or originated by the Council of Women. Quietly, persistently, untriflingly, this Sisterhood of Loving Service, whose work is perhaps but little recognized, steadily and continuously strives to overcome evil with good and create a wholesome public opinion which cannot tolerate conditions prejudicial to the best interests of the community, and who can say that:

"The struggle naught availeth,

The labour and the wounds are vain,

The enemy faints not, nor faileth,—

And as things have been they remain!

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,

Seem here no painful inch to gain,

Far back, through creeks and inlets making,

Comes silent,—flooding in,—the Main.

And not by eastern windows only,

When daylight comes, comes in the Light;

In from the sun climbs slow,—how slowly!

But westward,—look! the land is bright."

## THE COUNCIL IDEA

You ask if I will write a paper on the aim and work of the National and International

Councils. If by this title is intended an essay bearing especially on the aim and work of the Council in its broader fields, then I confess myself inadequate to the task. For it seems to me that the Council in all its branches has but one aim. And as circumstances have for some years deprived me of close touch with its work except under its local aspects, I am least of all qualified to present to others a living picture of what it has accomplished as a National and International force.

First of all let me emphasize the fact that the Council does represent and embody an Idea. Herein lies the secret of its value, its very reason d'être; and hence also arise those misunderstandings which are responsible for most of its difficulties, because it is so much easier to explain and to grasp a concrete fact, a definite object, than an abstract principle.

It is doubtless a simple statement as well as a true one, that a distinguishing mark of the Council is, that it limits itself to no one object whether literary, philanthropic or other, but that it embraces all aims of all Societies that tend to the general good. That this should be so is indeed essential to the carrying out of the Council Idea, but when taken as an "explanation" it is misleading, producing in the interested Council member an uneasy sense of things to be done, of impossible and never ending claims, and on the other hand leading to disappointment and lack of interest on the part of members of affiliated societies. While occasions will arise when the specialized cause may be greatly furthered by drawing on the influence of the larger and more representative body, yet to say that this is the object of the Council, or even that its purpose is the promotion of great causes through the joint action of the many, is to fall short of the full meaning of its informing Idea.

And this Idea is—"Unity."

Yes, that the world may be helped to realize this principle, that through its application it may overcome all the misery, and discord and weakness, that are the result of divided forces, a double standard, a divided life, this is the high mark towards which our Council strives.

But how does the Council, in its attitude towards life and things exemplify and commend that great idea?

It is, of course, written on its Constitution that this is its fundamental principle, its guiding thought—there we read that it unites within the bond of a common aim and in one great organization the scattered forces of womanhood throughout the world. By its one condition of Membership all women are admitted within it who are in any way, endeavouring to make life fuller, richer, and nobler. No specific line of thought or action is demanded by it; it will receive all who, whether by the power of conduct, or of intellect, or of beauty, or of social life, or manners, are making it a better thing to live. It would establish relations among mankind by a sympathetic comprehension of all their varied needs and their many points of view. All this is plainly the theory, the aspiration of the Council.

And so to pass to the application which the Council has made of its guiding principle to questions involving standards of life and character for men and women.

Here the Council has spoken with no uncertain voice. The man and woman are different, it has said, and in this difference lies their mutual need. Mentally as well as physically they are each others complement and completion. As conventional restrictions give place to natural limitation this will not be less, but more apparent; but this difference does not apply to the principles of life and conduct which must guide them both to their full and highest development. The application, the mode of expression, must vary, but the courage which leads the man to combat is the same courage by which the woman endures, the purity by which her womanhood stands or falls is essential to the strength and integrity of his manhood; and it is in this sense that the Council apprehends and endorses the view of Ben Jonson that "the ideal woman must have a learned and a manly soul," and his Faust "the eternal womanly." So shall he find in the woman truth and honour, and strength, and she in him a noble chivalry of thought and deed, and both together guiding their lives by one "Yea" and one "Nay" shall in such unity find the harmony of all difference, and the completeness of an undivided life.

These words "an undivided life" suggest one other sphere of influence in which the Council would express its great Idea—it is the sphere of life itself. Which of us does not carry about with us something of that old Manichaean idea of a "double absolute," of life in two parts, of which the larger, its toil and pleasure, and much of its beauty is a tribute to the lower god? Which of us, even if we grasp the conception that nothing is "unclean" can go on to say in the same sense that neither is anything "common"? God may be in the Mount; of this we are not so sure as were our fathers—but is it not for those who toil on life's dusty high roads or stray for a while into its pleasant places, that "every common bush's affair with" Him? Here the Council speaks again by its very Constitution of the unity of a multiform life. It would correlate and combine all energies that are working for "good," whether in art or literature, in "society" or in

"philanthropy" so called. And in dealing with problems social and industrial it acts from the conviction that these things are of as vital importance to the coming of the Kingdom of God, of a "new earth" in which dwelleth Righteousness, as are the questions which for the sake of distinction we call "religious." It is indeed by the energy, the unremitting toil of commercial and industrial life that practical philanthropy is made possible. Our hospitals and churches, all the innumerable agencies for the relief and uplifting of humanity, spring not only from the prayers and efforts of the social reformer, and of those set apart for spiritual ministrations, but also from the hard-won results of buying and selling in the markets and markets of the world. All are bound together, and all our present discords, whether industrial, social, or religious, must find their harmony in one and the same rhythm. "Man in accordance with the law of his being, the will of God, that is civilization."

So is all life essentially one, but till we see it so, till we realize its unity in diversity, our corporate and individual life is maimed, and Religion itself, becoming a "thing apart" instead of the consecration of all actions and all interests, loses its value to the soul and to the world. Work and worship, the pleasures of sense and the more imaginative and spiritual joys, are all parts of one life, all are necessary in their measure to its true fulfilment and to the realization of the Divine Life in men. This then is part of the message of the Council, a message which it seems to me breathes also through some beautiful words of Plato quoted in the life of the writer of "John Inglesant," words which seem to some of us "prophetic of one who came after," which bring to us all thoughts of a Divine Immanency, of a gracious and beneficent Presence, of the way in which that awe-inspiring Unity which is the goal and presupposition of all thought and science, can touch and reconcile our lives. You remember that Plato called Eros the oldest of the Gods, because through the uniting power of love he brought order and harmony out of Chaos.

"Into all these things," Plato makes Agathon say, as he tries to express the meaning and spirit of Love—"Into festivals and dances and sacrifices he enters, bringing mildness and peace; the friendly giver of goodwill to men, gracious to the good, sought after by the poor and needy; the giver of a happy life, of tenderness, of grace, of longing and of regret; in labour, in fear, in speech, the pilot, the comrade, the saviour; a leader the most beautiful and the best, whom all men should follow, chanting hymns in his praise, and sharing in that sweet song by which he charms to rest."

It is this song, the song of the "heavenly Anteros" that, sounding in men's hearts, shall, if they will but hear, bring all into union.

In these few words I have tried, however inadequately, to explain the great Idea which informs and guides the Council, and to indicate how it applies that idea as a test principle to life. The actual work which it has accomplished can be best told by others. As a rule its part is rather to initiate movements than to carry them out, to influence and suggest rather than to engage in large enterprise. In this part it has had much success. Through its influence women in industrial pursuits have been provided with additional moral and physical safeguards, and changes, reflecting and setting a higher moral standard have been made in the law. In all such matters it could, of course, have done nothing without the active sympathy and co-operation of men. That it has been able to secure these, is we think a tribute to the judgment of the Council, an evidence that it has not acted on mere impulse or superficial knowledge, but has formed conclusions only after careful thought and enquiry. Especially in dealing with trade and labour questions, as for instance the length of the working day for women in factories, has it been slow to advance opinions, while at the same time it has endeavoured by an intelligent sympathy based on an extended and accurate knowledge to help towards their solution.

The end which it keeps in view is such an amelioration of conditions, such an adjustment of relations, as shall give to every man the opportunity to make the best of himself, to know and to do his work, to find and to hold his true place in the social order and economy. And while its attitude towards industrial questions has been respected by the employer, it has also now the appreciation of the working class, one of whom wrote to me after an Annual Conference of the National Council "I followed the Convention throughout very closely, and must confess that I was most agreeably surprised and delighted at the amount of knowledge displayed by people who we thought knew nothing of the condition of their less fortunate brothers and sisters and cared less."

Yes, for the patience which the Council advocates and which it would practice, is not the indifference of *laissez faire* or the supineness of a hopeful submission, but the true patience of expectation, of a confident and energizing hope. It is because we believe that we do not make haste.

And the Council has also kept in view that the woman's part in ameliorating conditions must always be, above all else, the making, the conservation of the Home, and it is with this thought and motive that it has interested itself in sanitation, in the feeding and care of infants, in the exclusion of worthless or debasing reading matter, in the furtherance for a taste for good literature, good art, and the

industries and handicrafts of the Home. It has also given prominence at its meetings to the subject of household thrift and simplicity of life as opposed to ignorant waste and culpable love of display. It attributes to these, to the selfish extravagance of the rich, the heedless independence of the poor, much or most of those social evils which, while they are recognized as the canker of civilization, defy and baffle legislation, and are the despair of the State and of Civic reform. And it would have all women realize that much of these evils is due to their delusions, their carelessness, their unwisdom, and that the cure rests most of all in the influence of a pure and enlightened womanhood and the perfecting of the Home.

Yet in this as in other causes common to both, the man and the woman must work side by side, the man with his calmer judgment and his closer knowledge of the world to moderate and guide the woman in her passionate earnestness and her impelling hopefulness to uplift and sustain.

And the call of the Council is:—Men and women, let us go forward together, for our progress and our destinies are one, men and women let us go forward together, one in the infinite Unity, one in the infinite Love.

Jule Drummond

## NOTES FROM THE QUINQUENNIAL

"At the great quinquennial of the International Council held in Toronto in June, the Council re-affirmed and emphasized its previous attitude in favour of women receiving the same electoral advantages as members of the opposite sex with the same qualifications."

"It follows that with the development of unity of action the International Council of Women, while not in themselves possessing any legislative powers, must be reckoned as one of the world's political forces."

The following statement in the Literature Section of the Congress on the day devoted to "The Press" deserves to be repeated and remembered:—

"It is this matter of social items that constitutes our weakness and our shame. There are columns given up to such stuff that might have been used for better things. The dragging forth details of private life into the public press is as objectionable as it is undignified and we trust that the day is not far distant when we shall see this degrading gossip swept away from the woman's page and that we, as women, shall be ashamed to acknowledge that this is our chief item of the journalistic fare."

One of the few gentlemen who came from "Over the Seas" was Professor Hainisch, son of the beloved Frau Hainisch, President of the Austrian National Council. He is the founder of Public Libraries in Austria and a gentleman of learning and ability. While gracefully acknowledging that it was difficult for him to explain things in our English language, he made some interesting points regarding the management of libraries very clear and while he was most enthusiastic in his admiration of our Public Libraries as contrasted with those in his native land, he smiled sadly as he said apologetically, "Ah—but we have no Carnegie!"

"A Trip to Niagara" is the title of the attractive little booklet which was presented on the excursion to Niagara to the delegates and visiting members of the International Council by the Historical Society as a souvenir of the trip. The booklet is the work of Miss M. Agnes Fitzgibbon, an author of note in Canada, and head of the Women's Welcome Hostel, of Toronto. Typographically, it is perfection. The frontispiece is eminently appropriate, and particularly dainty, and is carried out in brown on a cream background. The design shows the Niagara grapes and peaches, and the crest and motto of the Women's Canadian Historical Society, and of the Toronto Travel Club, of whom the visitors from over the seas and International delegates were the invited guests for the trip. Regarding the contents, this little book is a gem, giving the interesting historical significance of the Niagara district, and calling attention to those points of interest by beautiful reproductions of photographs.

The unknown quantity called man was either unavoidably or designedly absent during the actual meetings of the Council, though occasionally a few varied the happy crowds of femininity!

"I hope that the gentlemen will not be afraid to come to our meetings," Her Excellency was heard to say more than once. Whereupon the members of the sex scattered through the audience sat up and enjoyed Vice-Regal protection.

"When the father builds his life and thought into his daughter as the mother has hitherto hers into her son, the world will see the grandest women and the kindest men. The manhood of strength and gentleness can only come as a result of the ministry of gentleness and strength, and home will be the training school."

"If some good men's theories are true, divine wisdom should have made impossible the inheritance by a daughter of her father's gift of eloquence, statesmanship or any other 'effeminate' quality. But, happily, great Nature is too great for tiny theorists."

## Niagara



ERED GALLARDIA (GALLARDIA ARISTATA)

The sky is stretched out over stony bastions, above the tall green conifers and the alpine tree-born in the heart of the sparkling glacial a silvery network enmeshing myriads of red blossoms, which bud and bloom at the feet of the mountain walls. Such is the garden of where the mountain wild flowers of Canada

"Twixt the green and the azure sphere."

You leave the Chalet hotel, at Lake Louise, the trail which leads into the Valley of the Ice, you begin the long slow ascent that ends at the shoulder of Mount Temple, from whence you in an exquisite view of Moraine Lake. Here you find a wonderful flower-field of great variety of color—of every hue sweep in great waves of color—down into the depths 3,000 feet below the Indian paint-brushes (castilleja, minata) and pale-cups (castilleja, minata) are found in all their glory, scarlet, red, pink, yellow and orange they abound on every hand, with them grow golden-silvery hairy hawkweeds (hieracium scouleri), harebells (campanula rotundifolia), phacelias (phacelia sericea), cherry-erogonums (erogonum umbellatum), blue-sedwells (veronica alpina), and a dozen dainties of vetch, saxifrage and rock-creeps, alpine meadow is a spot of supreme beauty, the wild clematis (clematis columbiana) and gentians (gentiana Macaulayi) are blue as the overhead, while the yellow columbines (aquilegia) toss their heads in the passing and a thousand flowers spangle the grass like faces upturned to meet the smile of the sun. These alpine gardens, held close in the arms of the hills, or set like jewels on the bare of the stone bastions are one of the great wondrous sights of the recesses of the mountains, the contrast between the beauty of blossoms and their surroundings being as vivid as enchanting.

Bunch-berry (cornus canadensis) is a dweller of these forests, where its white cruciform flowers are set in the green of the leaves. So also green-cap (clintonia uniflora), so named by English in 1803, the name being now adopted in the Indian nomenclature of plants; for quercus by its of all the lovely flower-caps which grow on mountain valleys, its pure white petals forming a fit for the First Lady in our land, and its pale green leaves constituting a fitting background for so ethereal a bloom.

The dry, sunny flats, at an elevation of from 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, the giant ferns (belladonna gigantea), great-flowered flax (gallardia aristata), full-fringed golden-rod (solidago canadensis, s. decumbens) and heart-nickens (arnica cordifolia) flout their gay colors, tall and handsome plants they are, and attractive. Close beside them grows the trail wild flax (linum lewisii) which droops as soon as gathered, and, or set like jewels on the bare of the stone bastions are one of the great wondrous sights of the recesses of the mountains, the contrast between the beauty of blossoms and their surroundings being as vivid as enchanting.

The executive of the Local Council consists of representatives from all its federated societies, as well as the officers and conveners of standing committees. These constitute a strong central body typifying unity in diversity for on this committee are women of varied interests, who differ widely in thought, opinion and work, but who can meet as a solid co-operative body in that unity which is their strength, and without which effort would be useless, to redress wrongs and secure the greatest good for the greatest number. It is theirs to look around in a community and see what is needed to be done and do it, to see what is being overdone and save the waste of energy. They cannot actually build hospitals or endow churches or orphanages or champion the cause of one federated society to the exclusion of another, but it is their function to help all. Not indeed financially, for the Council has no funds excepting the small fees paid by societies, patrons, life and individual members, which just meet its running expenses, but by suggestion and advice when desired and by bringing to the notice of the public any pressing need in order to enlist greater interest and sympathy, ever holding itself in readiness to respond to special appeals and organize strong active committees to raise funds for any urgent cause with the consent of the Executive as a whole. Apart from this the Council cannot interfere with or dictate to any of its federated Societies and is not responsible for any action taken by them as separate bodies.

Early in the spring the pasque flowers (anemone nuttalliana) appear on the land, their purple bell-shaped flowers opening long before the fern-like foliage develops about the thick stems. Very high up on some tiny plateau in a hollow amongst the hills, some play-ground in the sun, where a patch of verdure is laid in the brown lap, dew-drenched at dusk, ripened to fire by the sun at noon, wind-wrinkled by the that blow crisply off the glaciers, these large whorled pasque flowers spread in purple waves the waste, and turn the plateau into a paradise of flowers, from whose violet rim runs the warm of lovelessness.

The traveller, the wild flowers of the Rocky and the mountains are a wonderful revelation of the quality and color-painting of Nature in these regions; while to the house and to the source of interest and delight. There is no more beautiful, rich or varied alpine flora in the world than of the British Empire. It is the proud boast of Canada that within her Western borders grow the best specimens of many mountain wild flowers.