

WOMEN'S SERVICE  
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THE

# Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society),  
55, Berners Street, London, W.1.

Vol. XXXII. No. 4.

APRIL, 1946.

Price Twopence.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,  
We know the gifts ye gave and give;  
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,  
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson.

## The Fulfilment of a Dream\*

By CHRISTINE SPENDER

On February 11th, 1936, the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith released an Instruction to religious institutes regarding the assistance they might henceforth give mothers and infants in mission lands.

"This Sacred Congregation," it ran, "would like to see new religious institutes for women founded who will dedicate themselves principally to health work . . . (it) will likewise be pleased to see the already existing religious congregations of women start special branches for the work. . . . These new duties demand a proper spiritual and technical preparation. The Sisters should obtain certificates as doctors or nurses. . . . (They) should attend Catholic universities and hospitals to obtain the required certificates. . . ."

Behind this new Instruction which reversed the Canon Law forbidding religious to assist in obstetrical cases or to train as doctors, lay the patient prayers and persistence of Agnes McLaren, who planted the seed of the Society of Medical Missionaries in the mind of her disciple, Anna Dengel, who was afterwards to found this Society.

Agnes McLaren was born in 1837 and her's was an interesting life. Her father, Ducan McLaren, was a retail merchant of Edinburgh, much interested in the social questions of his day and an ardent member of the Presbyterian Church. Her mother died when she was very young and was the second wife of Duncan McLaren, who afterwards married a third time. The family was large and Priscilla was an excellent mother, both to her step-children and to her own children. Agnes met the great social workers of the day—John Bright, Richard Cobden, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler. When she grew up she was not interested in frivolities, social justice interested her far more and she ran a Sunday School and visited the poor children in their homes. She was always busy with works of charity. In 1860 she was drawn into the suffrage movement, together with her step-mother, and became secretary of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, a post she held for very many years. She did much work in the movement and much later, when she became a Catholic, she joined the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. Her contact with Josephine Butler caused her to take an interest in the work of the abolition of State Regulation of Vice. As a Catholic she was

able to write to various high officials of the Church to obtain their names as approving the work of the International Abolitionist Federation. She succeeded in this and a letter from the Holy Father, written in 1899, gave his blessing to a Congress of the International Abolitionist Federation held in Brussels.

Perhaps the decision to be a doctor which motivated the life of Agnes McLaren came about through her meeting with Sophia Jex-Blake, who had entered the School of Medicine for Women opened by the Blackwells in New York. Obligated to return to England she was allowed to take classes in medicine at the University of Edinburgh but owing to the hostility of the students there she left and ultimately obtained her degree at the University of Berne. Agnes McLaren decided that the best way of serving humanity, more especially women and children, was to be a doctor. She had some trouble in wearing down the opposition of her family and it was not until she had reached the age of thirty-eight that, on the advice of Cardinal Manning, whom she had consulted as to foreign Universities which might give women degrees, she went to the School of Medicine at the University of Montpellier. Here she boarded at the house of the Franciscan Hospital Sisters in the city. She had lived in a Catholic family in Rome when young and had been to the Passion Play at Oberammergau and now again she was in Catholic surroundings. Every week-day she attended the Sisters' Mass and she made a regular annual retreat under the direction of the Abbé Perra, of Lyons, where she stopped on her way home for vacations.

In October, 1878, she passed her medical examinations at Montpellier and a year later successfully passed her examination at Dublin for a United Kingdom degree. At the age of forty-one she settled down at Cannes to practice medicine there. She continued her retreats under the Abbé Perra and after twenty years of retreats she decided to become a Catholic and was received in November 1898, making her First Communion on December 8th. She led an ardent Catholic life, became a Dominican tertiary and opened a chapel in her house at Antibes, where she was allowed to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved. The priests who served the chapel daily were those needing a brief holiday which she gave them at her expense. One of these was a Monsignor Dominic Wagner, a member of the English Mill Hill Society, who came from the Indian Mission. It was his opinion that in certain parts of India it is only through women that the Church can exercise its influence on the people and their children. "Particularly is it absolutely indispensable to have women doctors," he said. He

\*According to the Pattern. The story of Dr. Agnes McLaren and the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries. By Katherine Burton. (Longmans, U.S.A., \$2.50).

wished to establish medical help for the women and children of India similar to that which the Protestants had started, and he had obtained the Holy Father's approval for such work. Agnes McLaren suggested to him that nuns should train as doctors and midwives but was met by the difficulty of changing Canon Law, though there appeared to be many who thought with her on the subject. However, not to be beaten, she turned her mind to plans for a Catholic hospital at Rawalpindi to be staffed entirely by Catholic women. Having won the approval of Pope Pius X for the venture, in 1905 Agnes McLaren started to interest people in France and England. The Medical Mission Committee was formed in London, under the presidency of Lady Mary Howard and the patronage of Cardinal Bourne. Appeals for funds went forward and at the end of 1909 all was in readiness for the opening of the hospital.

In 1908 Dr. McLaren made a visit to Rome to enquire of the possibilities of a change in the Canon Law forbidding nuns to engage in obstetrical work. She found little encouragement but was undeterred in her purpose.

The hospital in Rawalpindi was opened under the patronage of St. Catherine and a Catholic lay doctor was found to run it. But from the first there were difficulties, as a lay doctor unsupported by community life was bound to be intensely lonely and isolated. Though this first doctor excelled on the medical side and was beloved by her patients she found the life almost unbearable and when in the April of 1910 Dr. McLaren went to Rawalpindi affairs were so unsatisfactory she was obliged to accept the resignation of her protégée. The hospital was put in charge of four Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who agreed to continue the dispensary and home visiting until another doctor could be found.

Meanwhile Agnes McLaren visited various prelates in India to collect material which could be presented to the Holy See to show the necessity for Catholic women to do surgical and obstetrical work among Indian women. Everywhere the need was great and Dr. McLaren was able to see with her own eyes the misery caused by ignorance, lack of sanitation, neglected disease and neglect during and after childbirth. She went on to England to report to the Committee and to interest people in the need for Catholic women doctors who would be ready to lead a dedicated life. But always she came up against the difficulty of the change in Canon Law which would put the seal of approbation on such work.

About this time the Holy Father was urging nursing Sisters to take the State Examinations and this appeared to Agnes McLaren like a crack in the wall of conservatism and so, armed with letters of introduction, she went once more to Rome to present her case. Altogether Dr. McLaren made five journeys to Rome on behalf of women doctors for mission countries, the last in 1912.

In 1912, through her friend, Mlle. Victoire L'Abbe, Agnes McLaren came in contact with Anna Dengel, a young Austrian woman interested in work for the sick in the mission field. From the first Dr. McLaren envisaged her as the missionary doctor for Rawalpindi. These two women never met one another, for Agnes McLaren died in 1913 just before a projected meeting, but she had indeed found in the young Austrian woman the pioneer who was to carry forward the torch she had lighted.

Anna Dengel had spent her childhood and youth in Hall, a village near Innsbruck, in the bosom of a truly Catholic family. She was offered a medical scholarship by the Medical Mission Committee and it was decided she should go to Cork University to study for a British Medical degree. She remained in Cork during the Great War, took her degree, and afterwards practised in Clay Cross, Derbyshire, until, in 1920, the British Govern-

ment gave permission for her passage to India. She found herself in charge of St. Catherine's in Rawalpindi doing the work of a dozen doctors and unable to call upon anyone to render her aid in maternity cases. After three years at St. Catherine's the plan for a bigger hospital nearer the native city was formulated. But Dr. Dengel realised the necessity of much more financial aid and of interesting professionally trained women in the work, before this project could be accomplished. She went to England and while discussing matters with the Medical Mission Committee she suddenly thought of the U.S.A. as a potential source of subscriptions and personnel. The upshot of it was that she was sent to the United States by the Committee and conducted lecture tours in and around New York, Boston and Washington. She interested Cardinal Hayes and Bishop Walsh of Maryknoll in the new hospital and Cardinal Dougherty arranged publicity for her appeal through the Director of the Propagation of the Faith. The Cardinal's subscription to the fund was so princely that Dr. Dengel realised that the hospital was no longer in doubt.

While in Washington Dr. Dengel came in contact with Father Mathis, of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, who was much interested in the Indian Mission. With him she discussed the idea of a community dedicated to medical work in the missions and under his guidance she drew up Constitutions for a Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries. After the appropriate authorities had been consulted, permission to set up the Community was received on June 10th, 1925. The first doctor applicant for admission shortly presented herself, followed by two trained nurses, and soon a small house was found in Brookland where a beginning at Community life was made. A year afterwards the four women took the Mission oath and Dr. Lyons was sent to Rawalpindi to take charge of St. Catherine's and to supervise the building of the new hospital. Meantime there were more recruits for Brookland and the Community moved to a larger house. In October, 1927, the Society published the first number of the "Medical Missionary" and in the autumn of the same year the building of the Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi was finished. February 1928 saw its formal opening, staffed by three members of the Community who later had three probationer nurses to help them. The group in Washington went on growing and was obliged to make another change of house. As it was not possible to staff St. Catherine's Hospital this was reluctantly given up in 1929 but early in 1930 a third group of Medical Mission Sisters went to Rawalpindi and the same year the Sisters were asked by Bishop Crowley of Dacca to run four recently opened health centres in Dacca. Two years later they were asked to take charge of the Mitford Government hospital in Dacca and from that time their principal duties lay in training nurses for ordinary nursing and midwifery.

The Society in the U.S.A. was well established and membership increasing steadily and at the close of 1931 a House was established in Osterley, London, to receive European postulants. In 1934 the Society adopted a religious habit and in 1935 came the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Propagation Fide, and since Rome had confirmed the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries in its very purpose and ideals no vital change was necessary to enable the Community, which hitherto had made private vows, to become a Congregation with public vows. Official approval came in 1941.

Since 1935 the story of the Medical Missionaries has been mainly one of expansion, an expansion which continued even during the war. There has been a new Mother House in Philadelphia, a new House in Holland and a further hospital in Patna. Then there is the foundation of an Indian Medical Mission Sisterhood,

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## Notes and Comments

The names of the members of the executive committee elected by postal ballot on March 16th will be found on page 16. There were 17 nominations for 14 members—Miss Joan Morris, Miss Patricia Miller and Miss Mary Parnell were the unsuccessful candidates.

\* \* \*

We ask our members to remember in their prayers His Grace the Archbishop (Williams) of Birmingham, who died on April 1st.—R.I.P.

During the past year we had occasion to appeal to him on behalf of one of our members. His Grace immediately investigated the case and the matter ended most satisfactorily. Members will recall that the long controversy about the chaplaincy for the women undergraduates at Oxford was at length happily settled under His Grace's guidance.

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It gives us great pleasure to congratulate our good friend, His Lordship the Bishop of Pella, on the keeping of his Sacerdotal Diamond Jubilee during March. Bishop Brown's work for the poor of London is well known and he is one of the most distinguished authorities on Catholic educational problems. His Lordship is a member of the Alliance and has several times spoken on our platform, notably in favour of votes for women at 21. He spoke for us at our dinner in honour of the Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons and Mrs. Lyons. He gave the address at the Requiem Mass for our founder, Gabrielle Jeffery, on 20th April, 1940 (Month's Mind). *Ad multos annos.*

\* \* \*

We rejoice in the Government's decision to admit women to the Foreign Service but regret that their entry is not to be on equal terms with men (see the provisos mentioned in our article on page 18). We hope that there will be many applicants for the posts. These must be unmarried, or widows, aged between 21 and 31, and ex-service women will have a preference. Is it too much to expect that women in the Foreign Service will receive equal pay? When questioned on the subject, Mr. Bevin seemed uncertain.

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On March 4th, Lord Cecil, lifelong champion of women's emancipation, moved "that women should be eligible to be made peers on the same terms as men"; that a limited number of life peers should be created; and that a Minister of the Crown, not being a Peer, might be permitted to speak at a debate on a specified question.

After much discussion, when Lord Cecil found that the majority of the House considered it inexpedient to change the composition of the House

on isolated proposals, he reluctantly withdrew his motions.

With the Lord Chancellor, we had "hoped that somebody else would" have moved the motion withdrawn by the Earl of Mansfield "that peeresses in their own right should be eligible to sit and vote in this House." We regret that the motion was not raised by another, more particularly as the Lord Chancellor stated that the Government would have been prepared to introduce the necessary legislation.

At the close of the debate, Lord Samuel said that it must not be assumed that the House was against this motion for several were in favour of it. He suggested it should be discussed on its own merit on a separate occasion.

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On March 28th in Standing Committee on the National Insurance Bill, Mrs. Castle moved an Amendment for the compulsory inclusion of the employed married woman. The Minister agreed to consider the matter further.

\* \* \*

**Local Council Elections.** We are pleased to congratulate our member, Mrs. Winifred Russell (Independent), who has been elected to the Godstone Rural District Council by a large majority. There had been no contest in Godstone since 1925 and none within living memory in her particular ward. Mrs. Russell is a housewife and mother of three children; she founded the Citizens' Discussion Group in East Grinstead in March, 1944. We know her as a crusader and an able speaker.

Mrs. Veronica Webster, another member of ours, the Grantham Independent candidate for Kesteven County Council, was defeated by only 15 votes, probably because of her non-party views! She is a solicitor and the mother of young children.

Our member Miss E. C. Fortey (Labour) will retire from the Leicester City Council at the end of October under the new age limit. She has a magnificent record of twenty-three years as a Councillor and previously to that she was on the Board of Guardians from 1911 till she went to work in France during the Great War in 1914-1918. On the City Council Miss Fortey conducted many fights for the appointment of women police and on behalf of married women teachers. We hope to publish an article by her on her work on the Council.

Miss Billing, ratepayers' candidate for Northfleet U.D.C., was defeated though she had a good poll of over 1,200 votes. She is a member of the C.P.E.A. as well as of St. Joan's.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen"

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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 MISS BARCLAY CARTER, Lic.-és. L.  
 MISS P. C. CHALLONER, M.A., *Chairman.*  
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 MRS. SHATTOCK, M.B., B.S., D.P.M.  
 MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor*  
 "Catholic Citizen."

### 35th Annual Meeting

The 35th Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Alliance was held at St. Patrick's Club Rooms, Soho Square, on March 16th. A well attended meeting listened to the 35th Annual Report read by Miss Brandt. The Liverpool Branch report was presented by Miss Barry after which our good friend, Canon Reardon, spoke a few words of welcome appreciation of our work. Mrs. Whittles then moved the adoption of the report. She said that on reading it one was struck by the amount achieved and she wondered if women would ever realise what they owed to the untiring toil undertaken by the Alliance. Each year brought a feeling of satisfaction as there were always some victories to report, and this year's outstanding victory was the closing of the tolerated brothels in France which seemed to indicate a real change of heart.

Miss Grace Conway, introduced as "our faithful friend of the *Catholic Herald*," in seconding the adoption, said that when speeches were made she was generally at the receiving end but she had been prevailed upon to speak owing to Miss Barry's years of experience in overcoming opposition. She wished to record the unique experience of first coming across St. Joan's, for she regarded it as a most live and important organisation. Her first impression as a spectator had been that she herself knew nothing of political work and she was overcome with admiration at the scope and extent of our Parliamentary achievement. That achievement was a unique contribution to national life and she would like the handbill of gains due to woman suffrage to be always available to counter the stupid question: "What difference has the women's vote made?" The appeal of St. Joan's was its complete sanity, and the fact that it was out to see that man and woman should work together in shaping the world.

Miss Brigid de Vine, of the *Universe*, seconded the adoption and spoke almost entirely of her

appreciation of the *Catholic Citizen*. She said there was nothing slipshod or slovenly about the paper, it was always lucid, clear and well written; combining charm with politics.

Miss Helen Leslie, a new member of the Committee, supporting the adoption, said it was fatally easy to sit back but encouraging to mark the untiring efforts of St. Joan's and its cheerfulness in working for feminist ends.

The Australian report was read by Miss Barry and afterwards Mrs. Tenison-Woods from Sydney, child-welfare expert and a new member of the Alliance, told how she had fallen into the clutches of St. Joan's in Melbourne and escaped only to fall into the clutches of St. Joan's in London! She felt strongly that a section of the Alliance was needed in Sydney and that she had been fore-ordained to found such a section. She thought that in Australia more Christian ethic in public life was needed and more especially a new local organisation to express the viewpoint of Catholic women.

Senorita Durland, third Secretary of the Cuban Legation in London, told of the status of Cuban women, which is one of the highest in the world. In Cuba there was universal suffrage and equal eligibility; there were women ministers and women in the diplomatic service, and women held eminent positions in the ministries and professions with equal opportunities of promotion with men. There was equal pay and married women's work with full provision for pregnancy and child-birth, there were full property rights and employment rights.

The Treasurer's report was then presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Miss Organ, who said we must not be deceived by the cheerful look of the balance-sheet as there was really no money in hand for current expenses. The adoption of the report was proposed by Mrs. Garrard, who took the opportunity of making an appeal for funds. She mentioned that as we started the year from scratch it was most necessary to make quite certain

of the rent, which is £50 per annum, for one room. The upholding of St. Joan's reputation meant a tremendous amount of work; it must not be let down through lack of funds. The response to the appeal resulted in £40.

The Chairman's address followed. Miss Challoner said the most important thing during the year had been the words of the Holy Father with regard to equal pay and the participation of women in political life, and these should give us great satisfaction since non-Catholics could no longer have any grounds to assume that Catholics were supposed to be anti-feminist and Catholics could no longer say of Catholic feminists that they did not correctly interpret the mind of the Church. Then there had been the valuable work St. Joan's Alliance had achieved at the meetings of U.N.O. It is now up to us to see we have sufficient contacts in the U.S.A., the future home of U.N.O., to carry on this good beginning. Though African women and "native" women generally had not been specifically included in this year's resolutions we would continue to stand up for their rights on every possible occasion, especially through this new world organisation—U.N.O. We had been grateful and glad to resume contacts with our French members and the feminist movement in France, and also with friends in other liberated countries—and we rejoiced that the flag of St. Joan's had been kept flying under the nose of German occupation. We hoped those from European countries who have sheltered here, continued Miss Challoner, would be able to found more sections now that they have returned to their own countries, and thus our international work would be expanded. There were vistas opening up for St. Joan's work abroad. Here at the Annual Meeting we were privileged to have Mrs. Tenison-Woods, through whom we sent greetings and good wishes to St. Joan's in Australia and our congratulations on their work. Much work was yet needed at home; for instance, equal pay was by no means achieved, but step by step our ends were gradually being pushed on. Miss Challoner declared that the Parliamentary Sub-Committee set up by St. Joan's during the year was perhaps one of the most important pieces of work yet undertaken. Throughout the year one saw pieces of work but that work did not appear as a coherent whole until it was gathered together and described at the end. The design thus revealed is immense—many of us assist but the artist is our Hon. Secretary. Office help was very badly needed to release her from routine work to do more important work, but it must be remembered that this help had to be paid for. To conclude, Miss Challoner recalled the Holy Father's words: "That men and women must collaborate for the good of the State." Our aim, she said, is not isolated action, we are isolated

only because we are not yet permitted to collaborate on equal terms. When we are, there will be the working together of all those of good will in the service of God and humanity—which is the ultimate aim of our Alliance, and the hope of our individual hearts.

The following resolutions were put from the Chair and carried:

## 1. United Nations.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance expresses its satisfaction that the equality of the sexes is clearly and specifically written into the Charter of "fundamental rights" drawn up by the United Nations. The Alliance welcomes the establishment of a Commission on Human Rights with its subsidiary Commission on the Status of Women. In conformity with Article 71 of the Charter, it requests that suitable arrangements for consultation be made with the Economic and Social Council so that it may co-operate with the Council in promoting "equal rights for men and women" throughout the world.

## 2. I.L.O.

St. Joan's S.P.A. welcomes the adoption by the International Labour Conference of the principles of (1) "equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value"; (2) the prevention of "discrimination directed against workers by reason of their race, religion or sex," both incorporated in its Recommendation on Social Policy in Dependent Territories.

## 3. Status of Women.

St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government:

- to implement the clauses of the United Nations Charter regarding "equal rights for men and women" by passing legislation to remove all legal and administrative inequalities between men and women;
- to give *Peereses* in their own right a seat and vote in the House of Lords and demands that in any measure designed to reform the Second Chamber, men and women should have the same right to sit and to be elected;
- To give votes to women and eligibility for Parliament on the same terms as to men in the new Constitution of Malta.

## 4. National Insurance.

St. Joan's S.P.A. reiterates its demand that National Insurance should be based on the principle of equality between men and women and, in particular, that a married woman should be insured in her own right. It protests against the arbitrary powers given to the Minister to deal separately, by Regulation, with a large section of the population, i.e., married women.

## 5. Equal Pay and Opportunities.

St. Joan's S.P.A.

- reaffirms its demand for the establishment of equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work throughout the Government services;
- calls upon the Government to open the Foreign Service to women on the same terms as to men.

## 6. Nationality.

St. Joan's S.P.A. calls upon the Government to place the question of the nationality of married women on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of Dominion Premiers and to end the delay in satisfying the just claims of British women who marry aliens.

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## Parliament Month by Month

The great and overshadowing news this month was, of course, the opening of the **Foreign Service** to women. On 25th March Mr. Bevin was at last able to reply to Mrs. Middleton's questions. He spoke of the committee under the chairmanship of Sir Ernest Gowers and said: "I have now received their report, which is unanimous. . . . His Majesty's Government have agreed to accept the Report, and on the assumption that a general marriage bar will be imposed, which I shall have the power to waive in exceptional circumstances, we have accepted the Committee's recommendation that women shall be equally eligible with men for admission to the Foreign Service. The Committee, however, recommend that during the reconstruction period—which is affected by the recruitment of men who have been debarred by war service from normal entry—the numbers of women to be recruited should be limited to a maximum of 10 per cent. of the total admitted from the Reconstruction Competition as a whole. We have accepted the Committee's recommendation that when making appointments to posts abroad women should be eligible equally with men for appointment to both consular and diplomatic posts." It is not clear whether the normal Civil Service differentiation in rates of pay will apply to the Foreign Service or not. When Mr. Williams asked about this, Mr. Bevin replied, "I am not certain, but generally speaking there is a difference in such remuneration in the Civil Service. I cannot say at the moment, however, whether that applies to this case or not." In answer to a further supplementary by Mrs. Castle, he said: "I cannot say in what circumstances (the marriage bar) would be operated or waived, but I do know of the difficulty with men, sometimes, the other way round."

Mr. Piratin asked about the **Royal Commission on Equal Pay** on 6th March, and the Prime Minister answered that he could add nothing to his previous replies.

On 26th March Mrs. Ganley asked the Prime Minister "whether he will raise the question of the **Nationality of Married Women** at the Imperial Conference," only to be met with further stalling. "The forthcoming meeting," he said, "will not be a full Imperial Conference, but a personal meeting of Prime Ministers to discuss certain questions of major policy. In these circumstances this meeting would not afford a suitable opportunity for raising the question." When Mr. Errol pressed him further and asked if he could not "institute enquiries into the matter and get something moving," all Mr. Attlee could find to answer was, "That has been considered. It does need consultation with our Dominions." Something atomic is evidently needed before anyone will move.

One of the things which has been worrying Parliament recently has been the question of **Typists' Pay**. This was brought home to them very forcibly by the enormous delays Members experience in getting answers to their letters to Government Departments. The reason, they were told, is a famine of shorthand-typists, which in its turn is "apparently" due to the low pay. Mr. Dalton reported on March 19th that the Government has sanctioned an increase of 3s. a week for London and the larger provincial towns. Mrs. Manning asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether "he is going to raise the rate of men in these departments," whereupon Mr. Dalton apparently shocked the House to the core by replying, "I have yet to discover a male typist in a Government Department."

Sir Ben Smith, on 27th March, gave a somewhat cupboard-loving encouragement to married women when Lieut.-Colonel Price White asked what he intends to do about "Temporary staff in regional offices and at headquarters with a view to eliminating as far as practicable those married women and others who were taken on during the wartime labour shortage and who have no real need of the employment." Sir Ben replied, "In the present shortage of manpower it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to retain as many **Married Women** as possible as temporary **Civil Servants**."

On a similar point on March 19th Mr. Dalton said: "On the position of married women in relation to permanent posts in the Civil Service, I expect a report very shortly from a committee of the Civil Service National Whitley Council. Meanwhile I am very glad that many thousands of married women continue to be employed in temporary Civil Service posts, and the special wartime arrangements enabling an established woman Civil Servant on marriage to draw her marriage gratuity and stay on in the Service, retaining her former scale of pay and her eligibility for promotion are still in force. In pursuance of the Prime Minister's recent broadcast appeal to all women, who can possibly do so, to enter or continue in employment, Government Departments are most anxious to retain and recruit married women as temporary Civil Servants, wholetime or part-time, during the present critical period of national effort."

Mrs. Manning brought this point up in an interesting speech during the debate on Defence Policy on 5th March. She suggested that married women should help the Armed Forces with part-time work. "I can think of no better way," she said, "of absorbing **Women** in a part-time capacity than in the **Defence Services**."

Mr. Garry Allighan continues his sniping battle for the **Women's Land Army**. He attacked the Minister of Agriculture on 11th March and the Prime Minister on 18th.

## International Notes

**End of Licensed Houses.** The Constituent Assembly voted almost unanimously for the closing throughout **France** of the licensed houses of prostitution. In Paris six months' delay has been granted.

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**Belgium.** Eight women have been successful at the recent elections. To the Chamber of Deputies: Mme. De Ryemacker, Christian Socialist; Mme. Blumme Gregoire, Socialist; Mme. Gregoire Claes, Communist. To the Senate: Baronne della Faille d'Huyse and Mademoiselle Baers, Christian Socialist; Mme. Ciselet, Liberal; Mme. Spaak, Socialist; Mme. Degeer-Adère, Communist. We remind readers that although women may stand for election in Belgium, they may not vote. In this connection it is sad to reflect that in Greece women are still entirely unenfranchised.

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**France.** We welcome with joy the reappearance of *Le Droit des Femmes*, the first issue since April 1940. This is a mine of reliable and detailed information regarding the position of women in the new Constitution of France. It tells how Frenchwomen became citizens; of their work in the Consultative Assembly, the National Constituent Assembly and of the General Election. As regards the *nationality* of married women the Ordonnance of October 19th, 1945, reaffirms the Law of 1927. A foreign woman married to a Frenchman acquires his nationality on marriage unless she makes a declaration prior to marriage that she wishes to retain her own nationality. A Frenchwoman marrying a foreigner remains French unless she makes a declaration that she wishes to adopt her husband's nationality. Article 39 of the Code provides that for six months after the celebration of the marriage the Government may oppose the acquisition of nationality. During this period of six months a woman who has acquired French nationality may not vote or stand for election. We join with the Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes in their regrets that Maria Vérone did not live to share in the emancipation of Frenchwomen.

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**South Africa.** We learn from the *Sunday Times* of Pretoria, dated 6th January, that South African women are not optimistic about an improvement in their status in 1946. Two bills, one of which proposed to give a mother the joint guardianship with the father of her child and another to give a married woman the right to her own earnings, were both rejected during the last session of the Senate. Not deterred by this setback feminists are determined to intensify their campaign this year. A more cheerful note was struck in a letter

On 21st March Mrs. Manning asked the Minister of Education "how many of the county boroughs and how many county councils, including divisional executives and excepted districts, have provided for the inclusion of **Women**, or of a woman respectively, on their **Education Committees?**" Miss Wilkinson replied, "Specific provision for the inclusion of women on education committees has been made by 39 of the county councils and 50 of the county borough councils whose arrangements for the establishment of an education committee have been approved. A similar provision is made in 19 of the approved county schemes of divisional administration and 16 of the approved excepted districts' schemes."

In this connection it is interesting to note that the ten working parties set up recently by the Board of Trade include quite a number of women.

Sir Alan Herbert, it is interesting to notice, is still attacking the **Divorce Laws**. He asked the Attorney-General on 4th March whether he would abolish the Decree Nisi procedure. The Attorney-General replied that the question of abolishing or modifying the Decree Nisi procedure is at present under consideration. B. M. HALPERN.

## Nationality

With dismay St. Joan's Alliance learned of the statement of the Prime Minister in Parliament on March 26th that the forthcoming meetings of the Dominion Premiers "would not afford a suitable opportunity for raising the question of the nationality of married women."

Things seem to have moved since the Prime Minister's statement. The women's organisations in the Dominions have been pressing their Governments to raise this issue at the forthcoming meetings of the Dominion Premiers and **Australia** has taken the lead. With satisfaction we received the following cable from the Secretary of St. Joan's Alliance in Australia, dated April 4th:

"Premier gave President (Dame Enid Lyons, M.H.R.) desired assurance (in) Parliament yesterday."

Further, Reuter reports that on April 8th the Australian Prime Minister announced at Canberra that the "Australian Cabinet has approved Australia being represented at the British Commonwealth Conference to discuss proposed legislation on one nationality operating generally in British Commonwealth countries. The Cabinet also approved the principles embodied in the recently introduced Canadian Citizenship Bill, under which British subjects will automatically become Canadian citizens after five years' residence in the Dominion." From South Africa we have also very cheering news. Surely at last this matter will be settled and British women given equal nationality rights with men.

Meantime, a **Public Meeting** under the auspices of the Nationality of Married Women Committee and the Status of Women Campaign Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 8th, at 7 p.m., at the Bonnington Hotel to demand **Equal and Independent Nationality Rights for Men and Women**. Among the speakers will be Mrs. Cazalet Keir, Mrs. Ayrton Gould, M.P., and representatives from the Dominions. Members should apply to the office for tickets, one shilling each.

from one of our members, who mentioned that her sister used to send her copies of the *Catholic Citizen* to her husband in Italy. He told her they used to circulate in his unit and led to many interesting and often heated arguments and discussions.

**Switzerland.** A rare honour has been bestowed on Madame Suzanne Orelli, in the form of a portrait postage stamp, on the occasion of the centenary of her birth. She was the initiator of temperance restaurants in Switzerland.

**U.S.A.** Dr. Lise Meitner, who helped to discover how to release Atomic Energy, has been elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, a body which awards the Nobel Prize. She is the third woman to be so honoured, her predecessor having been Mme. Curie. We learn that Dr. Meitner has recently joined the staff of the Catholic University of America.

We welcome the reappearance of the *International Women's News*, organ of the International Alliance of Women, under its original format and able once more to publish its full quota of news from abroad.

We welcome the reappearance of **The Daystar in Uganda**, the half-yearly journal of the Franciscan Sisters of Uganda. Readers will remember that Mother Kevin, O.S.F., founded the Missionary Novitiate of the Franciscan Sisters in 1929. Mother Kevin has borne the burden and the heats of missionary life for forty-three years and at the age of seventy still carries on her pioneer work.

#### HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

We are grateful to all those who paid their subscriptions before the Annual Meeting. There are some, however, who need reminding. The minimum subscription, which includes the *Catholic Citizen*, is 5s.

In response to Mrs. Garrard's appeal at the Annual Meeting, for rent donations, £40 was collected out of £50 necessary. To those donors we are most thankful. Perhaps there are some who, having been prevented from attending, would like to send their donation towards the final £10.

J. M. ORGAN.

**THE FULFILMENT OF A DREAM—cont. from page 13**  
with novitiate at Malabar, to train Indian Sisters and prepare them for State Examinations in nursing, so that they can go into the villages of India and bring nursing care to their own people.

It is a story without end. There are already dreams of a Catholic Medical School for women in India in order to fulfil one of the aims of the Society of Medical Missionaries—that of a network of Catholic hospitals in India. Not only does India call for Medical Mission Sisters to "come over and help" but Africa and China and other lands. "In an ever-widening circle the work of Agnes McLaren goes on spreading and the ripples reach many shores."

We hope this excellent account of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries will soon be published in England.

35th ANNUAL MEETING—cont. from page 17

#### 7. Public Morality.

- St. Joan's S.P.A. reiterates its demand for:
- the repeal of Regulation 33B. It calls attention to its inherent injustice and to the fact that as at present administered, the liberty of the citizen is still more seriously menaced than before since persons are singled out and induced to attend for examination on the flimsiest evidence, often from a single informer;
  - the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of contraceptives.

#### 8. Education.

St. Joan's S.P.A. reiterates its demand for full financial equality for Catholic schools in the national scheme of education.

#### 9. Taxation.

St. Joan's S.P.A. demands the removal of all sex discrimination in taxation.

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

*Leonora de Alberti in the "Catholic Citizen,"*  
April, 1921.

The day seems to have dawned, which during the war many of us were considered pessimists for foreseeing. The reaction from the fulsome praise of women has set in, a reaction the more violent from the very exaggeration of the former rhapsody. . . . One is apt to forget how far we have travelled since those all but forgotten days before the war, and in moments of depression a few minutes' meditation on the obstacles overcome on our long journey is a powerful tonic.—*The New World.*



### THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN & ST. ELIZABETH

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### EXHIBITIONS

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