

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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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.*

## Maria Goretti: Model for Youth To-day

*From our Rome Correspondent.*

One of the greatest events of the Holy Year of 1950 has been the canonisation of a twelve-year-old girl who died only fifty years ago. The ceremony took place, this time not in the Basilica of St Peter's as is usual, but outside in the Square under Bernini's Colonnades, on the 24th of June.

Five hundred thousand people gathered to witness that solemn ceremony. A temporary altar had been erected in the huge square just under the central door of the Basilica. Here at 7 p.m. the Holy Father, Popè Pius XII, performed the canonisation.

The canonised twelve-year-old girl was Maria Goretti. The Pope in his homily on the life of the young Blessed, who died on July 6th, 1902, of fourteen dagger wounds rather than submit to the passion of a country youth, presented her as a model for the youth of to-day.

Thousands of white-clad schoolgirls were among the 100,000 pilgrims who arrived for the ceremonies.

In the crowd—or rather looking from the window of the Vatican you could see the modest figure of a ninety-one-years-old woman—Assunta Goretti—mother of the "martyr of purity." It is the first time in the history of the Catholic Church that a mother has seen her child raised to sainthood. Two brothers—Angelo, who came over from the United States to assist at this event; Mariano, living in Italy; a married sister, and a sister who became a nun—Sister Mary of St. Aelfred—and a few of those who had been cured by her help were silently praying during the whole ceremony.

Maria's body, preserved in wax, was exposed in the meantime in the Passionist Church of St. John and St. Paul for the veneration of the faithful.

On the 25th of June at 10 a.m. the first Pontifical Mass in honour of the new saint was celebrated at St. Peter's. A few days afterwards the body of Maria Goretti was brought in solemn procession from Nettuno, a small town one hour's journey from Rome and the place where she died,

to the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli for veneration of the pilgrims coming to Rome. And in the meantime at Nettuno, where so many miracles have happened during the last forty-eight years, a new Cathedral is growing out of the rocks, the Cathedral of Santa Maria Goretti.

The young girl whose veneration attracted five hundred thousand people to St. Peter's Square was born in the Eastern Apennines in Marche near the Adriatic Sea. Later her family had to settle down in the western part of Italy in Nettuno on the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea in the centre of the then famous and unhealthy Pontine Marshes.

She was illiterate. Her parents could not afford to let her go to school. But during the whole of her childhood she was the most pious child they ever knew. She early lost her father and her mother struggled on alone to win the family's daily bread, leaving Maria to manage at home. Alessandro Serenelli came to live in the same house and made advances to her. She steadfastly rejected them but twice within a month of her death he tried to ensnare her, threatening her with death if she said anything to her mother. The third time he made an attack her family was working in the fields, and, infuriated by her continued resistance, he stabbed her fourteen times.

Maria Goretti died a few days afterwards in hospital. The boy, now an old man, had to think over his crime in jail for twenty-six years, bearing no name only the mere number of a prisoner.

Maria died pardoning him and promising him that one day they would be together in Heaven.

Alessandro Serenelli is now acting as the gardener of the old Capuchin Friary of St. Serafino at Ascoli Piceno, in Marche, praying and waiting for the day when he shall see again his victim in Paradise.

It was in Ascoli Piceno, this small, romantic, mediaeval town that I had the opportunity of meeting the old man in his Convent. He did not want to be seen, he was afraid of being interviewed by journalists who all wanted to talk to him. Only when he understood that I was there

on behalf of a Catholic journal for women was he willing to speak a few words.

"There is nothing to be said," he uttered in his gloomy, forlorn way. "I was not permitted to be there at the canonisation, but Maria forgave me, her mother too. They promised me I should go and see her on her return from Rome to the neighbouring village of Corinaldo, where she is living now, to talk to her and to hear her account of the canonisation. . . . I am hoping," he continued, "that Our Lord will forgive me as well."

"Only I would not like to be taken any more to a film operator. I don't want to be seen on the screen as a murderer—never, never any more." He was referring to the Italian screen picture, "Il Cielo sul Pallude" ("The Heaven on the Marshes"), which even to think of caused him such horror that he shivered.

The burning Italian sun was shining down as he stood there on the threshold of his Convent. Tears came to his eyes as he shut the door of the house which is now his only refuge, only hope.

On my way back to the town I reflected: What a miracle that even this evil has been turned to good—as the Holy Father so beautifully emphasised giving a holy model for youth.

MAGDA DE SPUR.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

We rejoice that the following Article (17) has been incorporated in the Draft International Covenant on Human Rights—a Covenant which will have the force of law when ratified.

"Article 17. All are equal before the law; All shall be accorded equal protection of the law without discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

The Commission on Human Rights at its fifth session decided to refer the text of Article 7, together with the proposals and amendments made thereon, to the World Health Organisation for an advisory opinion.

Article 7 runs as follows:

"No one shall be subjected to any form of physical mutilation or medical or scientific experimentation against his will."

The W.H.O. declared this to be a most difficult matter on which to reach agreement, and after careful study the best recommendation they could make was that the purposes of the Covenant on Human Rights could best be served by the retention in the draft of the original Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely:

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

and that it would be preferable to omit the suggested Article 7 for the following reasons:

(1) Article 5 of the Declaration acts as a sufficient deterrent against the type of conduct that Article 7 of the Covenant is destined to prevent.

(2) It is considered extremely difficult to present an Article, which while preventing improper

medical intervention and experimentation would not also at the same time act to the prejudice of legitimate medical and social needs.

The "majority" view of the Member Associations of the International Council of Nurses support the following draft:

"No one shall be subjected against his will to physical mutilation or medical or scientific experiment not required by his state of health *both physical and mental*," these last four words having been proposed by the French representative at the Fifth Session of the Commission. Immediately on reading this in the *Nursing Times*, St. Joan's Alliance wrote pointing out the grave dangers inherent in the proposal.

Miss Schaefer, Consultant for the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues, ably presented an amended text to the Sixth Commission, stating opposition to "any experiment or mutilation having as its purpose or effect the impairment of the physical or moral integrity of the human person . . . even with the consent of the interested party when it is not judged indispensable to the recovery or the preservation of the person's health by a competent medical authority."

The latest Draft of the Covenant on this matter now reads:

"Article 4. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected against his will to medical or scientific experimentation *involving risk, where such is not required by his state of physical or mental health.*" (Italics ours.)

This is a grave matter affecting the liberty of the subject. Vigorous action must be taken for the amendment of this unsatisfactory Article.

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Leonora de Alberti in the "Catholic Citizen," July-August, 1925.

The Commission seemed very nervous of presenting the appearance of encroaching on the internal affairs of the various States. They were also very cautious as regards domestic slavery. This was defined by the Belgian Government as follows: Domestic Slavery is a condition consecrated by native custom in which either by the will of another person, or by birth, or sometimes of his own free will, a person is placed in relation to another in a position analogous to that of the goods and chattels of the latter. Distinct from slavery it only affects the natives.

Finally the Commission recommend that Slavery must be regarded from a comprehensive standpoint, and that the Commission should endeavour to indicate some practical measures calculated to ensure the gradual suppression of Slavery and analogous forms of servitude, and to facilitate the development of the social and economic conditions which succeed it.—*The Slavery Commission of the League of Nations.*

With sorrow we record the death of Mrs. Hope Robson on July 7th.—R.I.P. She was a faithful and generous member of the Alliance for very many years. We offer our deep sympathy to Mr. Hope Robson, and to Audreen who so often helped us at the office to send out papers.

## Notes and Comments

The triennial International Conference of the Alliance to be held in Rome the first week in October will bring together distinguished Catholic women from many parts of the world. Australia is sending a large contingent which will include as leader of the Victoria section Miss M. M. Flynn, who was the pioneer of the Alliance work in Australia. In addition to Great Britain, there will be strong delegations from France, Germany and Malta, and countries as far apart as the West Indies, Sweden, Ceylon and Canada will be represented.

\* \* \*  
L'Alliance *Jeanne d'Arc* held an important meeting in Paris at the house of Madame Pesson Depret on June 19th with Madame Russo, President, in the chair.

Soeur Marie André du Sacré Coeur, of the White Sisters, gave an address on the position of *La Femme en Afrique Noire*. She had recently returned from French Africa after doing a year's research for the French Overseas Office for Scientific Research and having made a two months' visit to the Cameroons at the request of the Vicar Apostolic of French Africa.

Among the audience were three distinguished visitors—Madame Jane Vialle, member of the *ad hoc* Committee on Slavery, Madame Lefauchaux, Chairman of the Status of Women Committee, and Madame Letourneau.

We shall have the privilege of publishing a summary of Soeur Marie André's important address in the next *Catholic Citizen*.

\* \* \*  
Our congratulations go to Mrs. Welfare on the M.B.E. awarded her for services to mental health. Mrs. Welfare writes: "It is certainly gratifying to know, especially when one remembers the early days of over thirty years ago, when one had to batter at doors that now stand wide open, that mental health work is considered worthy of recognition." She reminds us of the other early workers, all, incidentally, members of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. Chief among them is Mrs. Anderson who, as Miss Rodgers, was hon. secretary of the Liverpool Branch of the C.W.S.S. At that time she taught in a Special School, and later became one of the early pioneer workers in the Central Association for Mental Welfare. Others were the late Miss Havers and Miss May Moclair.

\* \* \*  
At the Conference of the National Association of Local Government Officers, the delegates reaffirmed, by a unanimous vote, the Association's policy of Equal Pay, and urged the National Executive Council to take vigorous action in all appropriate quarters to secure the implementation of this policy. A large proportion of the delegates were men.

Miss P. E. Taylor, in moving the resolution, described it as a "sort of consolation prize for the women members." Miss Monaghan thought it deplorable that the economic situation of the country should over-ride justice, and Miss Mary Hamilton pointed out that there were 60,000 women in the Association, and that they would give the National Executive Council a "tough time" while they were being kept waiting for equality. One man member expressed a warning that the women were asking to be "gradually eliminated from the service"—but he voted for the resolution.

\* \* \*  
The Economic Information Unit of the Treasury reports new record levels for exports; an increase in dollar earnings; a nine per cent. increase in industrial production in the first quarter of 1950; and continued low unemployment figures.

It then gives attention to "the things women do"—their work as wives and mothers is "impossible to measure or to over-estimate"; in addition to this—one paid worker and one factory worker in every three; one agricultural worker in every seven is a woman. Nine out of ten single women do paid work, so do one out of five married women.

"There is no industry in this country to which, in one capacity or another, women are not attached, from shipbuilding to aircraft manufacture, from saw-milling to the tanning process of fellmongery. They design precision tools and manage laundries, grind telescope lenses and act as printers' assistants, "enrobe" chocolate centres and make bolts for aircraft, put handles on cups and test razor blades by splitting hairs with them, make fireworks and trace designs for concrete mixers."

\* \* \*  
Woman form one-fifth of the employees in the engineering industry; twice as many women as men produce the cotton textiles which form "our third most important export, bringing in just under a tenth of all we earn by exports"; and there are more women than men in the pottery industry, a very important dollar-earner. And all this for a fraction of the pay given to men in the same jobs!

\* \* \*  
The Committee set up by the International Labour Conference on the question of equal remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value held sixteen sessions at Geneva in June, with Sir Guildhaume Myrddin Evans, United Kingdom, presiding.

The decision as to a Convention or a Recommendation relating to equal remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value was postponed, and it was decided to place this question on the Agenda of the next General Session with a view to a final decision.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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## The Solicitation Laws: Injustice and the Remedy

It has long been recognised in legal procedure in Great Britain that any accused person is presumed to be innocent unless and until proved guilty by adequate evidence. But this fair treatment is denied to "common prostitutes."

Neither prostitution nor solicitation thereto are offences in this country; yet, note that under *Table C, Magistrates' Courts, Non-Indictable Offences, Persons dealt with Summarily, and Nature of Offences* (see Cmd. 7733, Criminal Statistics, presented to Parliament, July, 1949) there are classified under *Prostitution (Offences Committed by Prostitutes)* the following figures: Year 1946, 4,423; 1947, 5,079; 1948, 5,696. In fact, these cases have been dealt with by a twist of clauses in the Vagrancy Act, 1824, the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, and the Town Police Clauses Act, 1847. Those clauses cover "riotous or indecent behaviour," "loitering . . . for the purpose of prostitution or solicitation to the annoyance of" certain people, and "loitering or importuning passengers for the purpose of prostitution," by "common prostitutes." In such cases, the evidence of police officers that A.B., being a common prostitute, has committed one of these offences is accepted as sufficient evidence for conviction. It is on police evidence that the woman is labelled a "common prostitute," and on police evidence unsupported by that of the person annoyed, some thousands of women are convicted every year for one or other of the offences cited above. The term "common prostitute" implies bad character; neither this implication, nor previous conviction for the same offence is usually admissible evidence; its application to the accused woman must prejudice the court; this is unjust; and it is flagrantly unjust that she should be convicted without corroborative evidence. Cases of wrongful arrest or conviction may be comparatively rare, but they do undoubtedly occur, and it is very difficult for a woman whose guilt has been thus assumed to prove her innocence.

Defenders of this system claim that without it there would be more prostitution and solicitation

in the streets. Actually the fines imposed are no deterrent to the woman who makes a regular living by prostitution and incurs them repeatedly: she regards them as a professional expense that can easily be met from her earnings. She goes to the Court with the money in her pocket, pleads guilty, pays her fine, and for her the episode is closed. Nor do fines deter the first or occasional offender with whom money is not plentiful, since she merely resorts again to the streets in order to earn the wherewithal to pay them or to meet difficulties consequent on imprisonment in default of payment. So there are no fewer women on the streets, more fines are imposed, and the money thus acquired goes into the public purse.

But women once labelled as *prostitutes* are not only subject to special laws and procedure: they are also *excluded* from important sections of the law which protects women and girls from sexual exploitation (see Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, Ss. 1, 3). *For common prostitutes and women of known immoral character*, even if under 21, are expressly excluded from protection against procuration for sexual intercourse either within or without the King's Dominions—even by false pretences or representations. Thus the very persons most likely to be drawn into the "trade" are those deprived of full legal protection. And that a trade does exist, is undeniable.

The only remedy is such legislation as will prevent the placing of any woman in a separate class, and depriving that class of ordinary justice. The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, in consultation with representatives of Societies working for this end, and after consultation with sound legal opinion, has prepared a Draft Bill to remedy the faults of the Solicitation Laws; and further, the Association is hard at work organising a campaign to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, a less controversial but much needed step. It is heartening to find how many groups are prepared to support what is, in fact, one more demonstration of belief in the equal moral standard on the basis of justice; for the legislation outlined above nowhere requires

recognition of the fact that the prostitute could not exist if her body were not in demand, and, ignoring the sound basis of English legal procedure, commits a double injustice upon the "common prostitute."

M. CHAVE COLLISSON.

## PETITIONS TO THE VISITING MISSION

While the Visiting Mission from the Trusteeship Council was in Togoland and the Cameroons under French administration various Petitions were presented. Amongst them were several which stress the evils of the dowry system, forced marriages and polygamy.

Monsignor Joseph Strebler, Vicar Apostolic of Lome, Togoland, speaks of the necessity of giving education to girls to teach them to carry on the campaign against polygamy "which is still the great scourge of our country"; Monsignor Bonneau, Vicar Apostolic of Douala, in the Cameroons, confesses that there too the education of girls is much less developed than that of boys. He condemns the evils of the dowry system as hindering stable unions and causing a low birth rate and social disorder; and polygamy, which is increasing on a minor, while decreasing on a major, scale. He complains that monogamous marriage is not protected by legislation and that divorce is granted on frivolous grounds. Although eighty per cent. of the populations of the southern Cameroons have embraced the Christian concept, they have no status of their own and are subject to a customary law which no longer accords with their ways of thinking.

A Petition from the *Association des Parents d'Elèves de l'Enseignement Libre* (Togoland) pays tribute to the work of the Missions and their efforts to improve the status of women in words that are worth quoting: "For this picture of the beneficent influence of the missionaries on the local plane to be even superficially complete, we should have to describe their fundamental work to reach the very soul of our people by their Christian teaching, the effect of which is to temper our ancestral customs by imbuing them, especially in the family, with principles which are more humane and more in conformity with the universal laws governing the respect due to the individual. Mention should also be made of their efforts to improve the status of women and to eliminate forced marriage which is still practised in some tribes without the consent of the girl."

Finally, a Petition from *Evolution Sociale Camerounaise* gives the following among the reasons for the low birth rate and marriage under age; polygamy; the dowry system which "now constitutes a real purchase price. Because of it many young men in the Cameroons are unable to

marry, and will remain bachelors all their lives because their financial means will never allow them to buy a wife, the average price of whom to-day is never less than 30,000 francs." This state of things leads to promiscuity. Prostitution is also encouraged by insufficient education and by the behaviour of white men who "use" the girls and "arouse in them the taste for money."

In connection with "Domestic Education" there seems a certain conflict of ideals. The *Evolution Sociale Camerounaise* admits "we are well aware that we cannot expect any remarkable developments so long as our women continue to live in the background." They feel, on the other hand, that efforts to educate the women "into higher standards" have sometimes been wasted because "most educated Cameroon women are not sufficiently trained in household duties." They say, quite justly, we feel: "For the sake of our future we cannot refuse to encourage our womenfolk to take the same studies as we do; but it is essential for them also to have an adequate domestic education designed to be of use to the African family." If they did but know it, this difficulty has been encountered in European society as well as in African, and the failure of mothers to teach their daughters domestic arts is being largely countered by the teaching of domestic science in our schools. But we feel it is going a little far to demand "that whenever educated young people marry, it should be stated whenever necessary whether the girl has a certificate of domestic proficiency or not." Also the further petition that the African girl should give an undertaking that, at the end of her schooling, she should not marry anyone but an African black does really seem to encroach too much on the personal freedom of the girl.

Those women of the Cameroons (under both French and British administration) who are organised as the *Comité Féminin de l'Union des Populations de Cameroun* submitted a Petition considering that as women have the same rights as men, they can no longer be kept apart when it is a question of the political, economic, social and cultural interests of their country. The women of the Cameroons, they say, "have the right and duty to take part in the work of emancipating our country." They request the recognition of human and civic rights for all men and women of the Cameroons, the abolition of racial discrimination and many other reforms.

**United Nations.** At the Fourth Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations on United Nations Information, held in Geneva last June, St. Joan's International Alliance was represented by Madame Darbre and Miss Gloria Hallman.

## THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

Parliament met again on June 13th after the Whitsun Recess.

The most vital and controversial topic discussed during the period was the Schuman plan (June 26th) following the publication of the Labour Party document on European co-operation and the Prime Minister's statement on June 13th.

The Finance Bill was considered in Committee from June 14th to the 23rd. On the first night the House sat until 7 a.m., an act of mortification which gave rise to considerable disturbance about the catering position.

On the one hand Mrs. Middleton was (very properly) concerned that some of the women members of the staff had had to sit up all night after their day's work. Dr. King asked a question on the same subject, but Mr. Coldrick, Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, was not very optimistic about preventing a recurrence. He blamed Members themselves, saying: "I would suggest that it would be advisable for Members themselves to run the House in such a way that we can definitely anticipate the needs."

On the other hand, Mr. Gammans asked on June 26th how much food was left on the Refreshment Department's hands as a result of the House rising unexpectedly early. To this Mr. Coldrick replied somewhat ominously that such food is served mostly "in some other form." One imagines that the Refreshment Department's job must be somewhat exasperating at times.

Among the defeated amendments to the Finance Bill was one recommending the extension of the housekeepers' income tax allowance of £50 to "unmarried persons, male or female, who attain the age of 55." From our point of view the wording of the amendment, at least, was impeccable, whatever the arguments may have been.

Another amendment in favour of exempting war widows' pensions from tax was also defeated.

Later in the debate Miss Irene Ward put up a moving case for the unfortunate gentleman whose trousers were seized and auctioned by the collector of taxes to pay income tax debts incurred by the firm where they had been left for dry-cleaning. This case, known, apparently, as "the trouser incident" was deplored by the Solicitor-General, who undertook that such incidents should not recur.

The question of Equal Pay was raised twice. On June 22nd Miss Ward asked whether "... His Majesty's Government has now reversed their earlier endorsement in principle of the policy of equal remuneration?" Mr. Isaacs replied: "No. The policy of the Government remains as set out in the statement made by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer to Parliament on June 11th, 1947, and the attitude of the United Kingdom Delegation at the (I.L.O.) Conference has been, and will

continue to be, based on that policy." But two days earlier the Prime Minister found a new formula for not practising what you preach. He said: "My right hon. Friend (Mr. Isaacs) drew the attention of the (I.L.O.) Conference to considerations which should be taken into account if practical conclusions are to be reached on the methods of application of the principle of equal pay. In so doing he said nothing inconsistent with the Government's policy with regard to the acceptance of this principle."

On June 22nd, in answer to a question on Civil Service sick leave asked by Major Lloyd, Mr. Jay said, among other things, that, "In the Post Office the average number of days of sick leave per established civil servant was 12.6 (men), 15.8 (women)."

Mr. Sorensen continues his fight on behalf of unmarried mothers. He asked one question on June 22nd about the publication of affiliation application statistics in England and Wales and was assured by Mr. Ede that these figures will henceforth be published every year. On June 21st he asked the Foreign Secretary about the hardship suffered by unmarried German mothers who are unable to bring affiliation proceedings against putative fathers in this country, to which Mr. Younger still replied, "the position cannot be improved without legislation" and "I cannot offer any hope that there will be an alteration in the future."

B. M. HALPERN.

## International Notes continued from page 55.

could marry as many women as he could support but now "the women are beginning to realise they ought to be treated like the wives of Christian Philippines." A law has already been passed which will—in twenty years' time—prohibit any further plural marriages. "At present a woman in Moro land . . . is considered as a piece of property which can be changed when she is old and has lived out her usefulness."

The Princess hopes to get her degree of Social Service at Chicago University so that she may be equipped for the work to which she has dedicated herself—"the uplift of the Moro women."

Of the 3,916 persons on the U.N. staff, at Lake Success, at Geneva and at Information Centres, 1,737 are women. But 76 per cent. of them are in the seven lowest grades of the international civil service. In the five top-salary levels, there are only three women against 177 men. The highest ranking woman in the U.N. Secretariat is Mrs. Alva Myrdal, of Sweden, Director of the Department of Social Affairs. The two other women are from the U.S.A.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**Australia.** Senator Dorothy Tangney asked in the Senate whether Mr. McBride would introduce lower rates for women passengers in the Australian Capital Territory, thus setting an example to State Governments and private commercial interests as a step towards bringing the female basic wage—only 54 per cent. of the male basic wage—into line with living costs.

The answer was that in the absence of a female basic wage for the capital territory, women's wages were determined on a percentage basis of from 60 to 75 per cent. of the male rate. It would not be practicable to comply with the request.—(*The Dawn Newsheet*.)

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The Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia—in answer to a question put to them by the *Daily News* after a police raid on certain "tolerated houses"—sent the following statement to the Press:

"The Women's Service Guilds are opposed to the State Regulation of Prostitution as a social device, or of a system of 'Tolerated Houses' such as obtains in Roe Street. Prostitution is one of the biggest vested interests in the world in which enormous profits are made by a third party exploiter, who is difficult to trace.

"Promiscuity invariably leads to social diseases for which the woman concerned bears all the blame."—(*The Dawn Newsheet*.)

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**Malta.** At the next election in September, the Hon. Mabel Strickland will stand as a candidate for the reformed Constitutional Party. She is retiring from the editorship of the *Times of Malta*. Miss Strickland is a Vice-President of St. Joan's International Alliance.

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**Mexico.** *Worldover Press* reports a new decree which allows women to be landowners and members of the agrarian co-operative communities in their own right, and equally with men. Women in future will receive parcels of land in the distributions of land from the great landed estates which are made regularly by the Agrarian Department.

It is estimated that the new law will benefit, during the next three years, no less than 60,000 farm women, some of whom, having been abandoned by the father of their children, have hitherto had no means of support for them.

The decree also creates co-operative communities in the villages, composed entirely of women, who will be taught the elements of accounting, agricultural techniques and cattle raising by travelling educational missions.

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**Philippines.** Bai Matabai Plang—daughter of an hereditary Moro leader in Mindanao—is now in Texas studying Home Demonstration work amongst rural people. In an article published in the *Countrywoman*, she says that formerly a man

(Continued on page 54).

## MARY TENISON WOODS

Last month we congratulated Mrs. Tenison Woods on her appointment as Chief of the United Nations' Section on the Status of Women. Since then, we have been happy to see the name of Mrs. Tenison Woods in the Australian list of the King's Birthday Honours.

Mrs. Tenison Woods was the first woman in South Australia to be called to the Bar. Her first brief in Adelaide took her to the Children's Court and what she found there shocked her profoundly. She became convinced that juvenile delinquency was a moral and sociological problem rather than a legal one. So much had she the children's welfare at heart, that after ten years she gave up a most flourishing legal practice to become the outstanding reformer of Child Welfare in Australia. It is in recognition of her services in this sphere that she has received the O.B.E.

Mrs. Tenison Woods is the author of many legal text books, including *War Damage Legislation, Commonwealth Landlord and Tenant Law*. With her sound sociological training and first-class legal mind, she will be invaluable at Lake Success. Her post with the Status of Women Commission was conferred on her in spite of the fact that she made no secret of her doubts as to the wisdom of having a separate Commission for the status of women. The *Sydney Daily Telegraph* reports her as saying: "I have never been very happy about the fact that the United Nations has a Status of Women Commission existing side by side with a Human Rights Commission. It looks as if women are not human, doesn't it? I think women's rights should be approached as a general human problem."

When in England in 1946, investigating English conditions of Child Welfare, Mrs. Tenison Woods became acquainted with St. Joan's Alliance, and on her return to Australia she founded the New South Wales Section of the Alliance. St. Joan's in Great Britain has therefore the greater reason to record her honours and to wish her well.

## REVIEWS

**The Pilgrim's Guide to Rome.** By M. Digby-Beste. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne. 3s. 6d.)

This short guide seems admirable for its purpose. It gives a clear account of what to see in a brief visit to Rome and how to see it: it makes no attempt to give lists of the treasures, e.g., in the Vatican Museum, but does give the chief buildings of both Classical and Christian Rome, with enough about each to stimulate interest. There are indications of expeditions outside Rome for those who have time or inclination—and a useful appendix with a list of the Ecclesiastical Colleges; the dress worn by the various Students—and the bus and tram routes with a useful map of the city. P.C.C.

**Reviews**—continued from previous page.

An article in the current issue of **Missions and Missionaries**, organ of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and the St. Joseph's Missionary Society, deals with Marriage Dowry in Africa. It is entitled, "Where the Woman Never Pays," and is written by Father S. P. Blair. Father Blair gives an excellent explanation and account of "this old pagan custom." He says that the missionaries uphold it since "it is not essentially pagan and has some good points"—"the dowry is a great guarantee for the stability and permanence of the marriage, even among pagans." This may be so, but the "tidy sums" given for a woman must, we feel, lead to her being considered as property—on a par with the "sixteen head of beautiful cattle, six lovely goats, sixty silver shillings" which are given for her. That the women themselves insist that a large dowry should be paid for them does not really alter facts and we do not quite like the facetious tone of parts of this article which deals with a "great problem in Africa to the man about to marry."

For instance, the article is introduced thus: "Father P. Blair . . . skates gaily over thin ice and scores some sly hits against the ladies." It does not sound somehow as though Father Blair had much respect for the "ladies" of whatever race. C.S.

The May-June number of **The Medical Missionary** tells of the formal opening of the Holy Family Hospital, Rawalpindi, by Mohammedan Major-General S. M. A. Faruki, Director General Medical Services, Pakistan Army. The hospital is a direct descendant "of a very unpretentious women's hospital" started in 1910 and put in charge of Dr. Anna Dengel in 1920. In a telegram Mother Anna Dengel paid tribute to Dr. Agnes McLaren and Monsignor Wagner, the original founders of the Rawalpindi Mission.

We congratulate the Medical Mission Sisters on the tangible fruit of their noble venture. Since 1928, when the old Holy Family Hospital started with forty beds, "thousands of disease-stricken women and children and maternity cases" have flocked there. The ever-increasing demand for admission makes the provision of a new building a real triumph.

**TREASURER'S NOTE.**

Will all members who have not paid this year's subscription (minimum 10s., including *The Catholic Citizen*) be kind enough to do so before the end of July. NOREEN CARR,

*Hon. Treasurer.*

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