

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.

The Position of African Women

We are privileged to print the resumé of a lecture given to l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc in Paris on June 19th, 1950, by Soeur Marie-André of the White Sisters of Cardinal Lavigerie.

Soeur Marie-André began by saying that she was happy to give the first fruits of her observations arising from her seventeen months' research in French West Africa and the French Cameroons to the Alliance "qui depuis si longtemps s'occupe d'améliorer le sort des femmes, sans distinction de race ou de couleur."

The general impression she had received from her investigation was of a recrudescence, since the war, of two evils, divorce and fetichism. An abuse of liberty has led to an increase in the activities of sorcerers and fetichists, with ritual crimes including human sacrifices, sorceries and poisonings, together with the forcing of women and girls to enter the fetichistic "convents" by all kinds of pressure, even by kidnapping.

Fetichism, Soeur Marie-André explained, is based on the idea of a spiritual rebirth by which each member of the tribe is incorporated into his tribe by being "born again"—or initiated. If, as sometimes happens, the "tatouages rituels" cause the death of the child, nothing can be done, the fetich "has not brought it to birth." The initiation camps are jealously guarded. Soeur Marie-André was not able to visit them, but she did visit some of the convents in Dahomey, where the fetichists are trained. She talked to some of the girls who had been forced into them, some promised before their birth; one child of eleven-and-a-half had been there three-and-a-half years without once going outside. Generally the novitiate lasts about a year—the parents supplying the nourishment of their child, but they have no other rights. Failure to say the prescribed prayers to the fetich (maybe a root or a stone) or to salute another fetichist, is rigorously punished; failure to learn the dances and language of the fetichistic ritual may lead to "suppression" i.e. burial in a hole in the ground. In this case the parents are notified at the end of the novitiate—by being handed a sack containing a cat. Africans do not speak easily of these things—they have a wholesome fear of poisoning.

These convents are becoming more numerous and the best way to counter their influence is more education, for girls as well as for boys. They have almost disappeared in Nigeria where schools for girls are more numerous, though still too few. Soeur Marie-André, in speaking of the increase of divorces, said it was largely the result of the disastrous influence of a prosperous economy on primitive social institutions which take no account of the rights of the human person, particularly the woman. Where marriage is based on transfer of ownership, the woman becomes a valuable commodity—hence marriage has become a "black market" and the girl goes to the highest bidder. "There," said Soeur Marie-André, "we touch the grave problem of the dowry and of its abuse."

The dowry used to be symbolic but now it has come to have a fantastic monetary value. "Ce qui se paie peut se vendre": in one case one suitor offered 100,000 francs—another a motor-car, but the third outbid them both with the offer of a new German lorry. Another girl of fifteen had already been the object of barter four times—the last purchaser giving 100,000 francs to buy her from the man who had paid 60,000 and whom she had already left.

It is in the Cameroons that the degradation of marriage is at its worst: a father talks freely of selling his daughter, he claims the right to take her back to sell her more dearly—unless the husband will pay a "supplement de dot." Sometimes he will pay again and again to keep his wife. The woman is never her own mistress. If a man wishes to help a poor relation, he will buy him a wife, and the donor has then the right to half the daughters of the marriage. If a girl refuses to go to the man who has paid the dowry she is told she has a "dette dans la peau" and must go to him who has paid for her. In other cases the girl has to be given by the father, the chief, or the one to whom she belongs, and these have the right to the first daughter of the marriage. In this way 50,000 girls a year are born belonging to the former owners of their mothers. These can claim them when they like, keep them for themselves, or give them to a servant or to an important guest. Men unable to get wives will go to a "possesseur

de filles," and work, sometimes for years and without even the right to choose a particular girl at the end.

The fact that the woman is regarded as property is borne out by the customary texts: amongst "movable property" are listed women, girl children, huts, animals, etc.; those under guardianship are (a) males till they reach their majority, (b) women and slaves—(though the slaves, unlike the women, may become free!).

Women are "potential wealth" so they figure in many cases concerning inheritance in the Customary Courts. As late as July 8th, 1949, a claimant demanded judgment that he should inherit the goods of his dead brother—a plantation of bananas, two widows and the daughter of one aged fifteen; a boy of fourteen demanded as his inheritance one widow (his mother), three children (including himself), three sewing machines, two saucepans, etc. These cases were agreed. A boy of fifteen brought a case against his mother as she would not marry the man he had chosen for her. Hundreds of such cases come before the Customary Courts—because a judgment assures the heir of the right to the dowry when the girls marry or the widow marries again and it is important to establish who is her owner.

The advanced pagans see the evil for as late as December, 1949, and January, 1950, the notables of two districts voted the suppression of the dowry, but even Christian parents are drawn into what has become a vicious circle. The dowry paid for the daughters helps the sons to marry. A boy may take ten years to collect his dowry unaided—and prices are rising.

These abuses of the dowry, said Soeur Marie-André, result in prostitution, sterility and depopulation. Fathers who have no sons will not allow their daughters to marry—they lend them to "amis attitrés" whose children will be "children of the grandfather" so that the inheritance rests with them. Sometimes the girls, weary of waiting, take to prostitution with regular clients and only marry when they are old—anyone—with or without dowry. Many in this way of life become sterile. Soeur Marie-André quoted an example of one encampment of seventy households and not a single child. In some places forty to sixty per cent. of the men are unable to marry for the rich men have bought the girls. Such statistics as are available go to show the alarming fall in the birth-rate in Black Africa—in one group of villages in 1949 there were two hundred and seven deaths and only ninety-four births and eight women pregnant out of 1,013; in a village of 1,000 inhabitants there were only three babies under three years old; since 1945 there had been one hundred deaths and only twenty births.

The attitude of the educated girls towards the dowry is one of disgust. "Nous ne sommes pas des chèvres, nous ne voulons pas être vendues",

and they tend more and more towards monogamy and the founding of a home. To break this custom more is needed than the wish of the women and the goodwill of some men. What Soeur Marie-André proposed was to allow every girl to marry freely—and if necessary without her parents' consent when she reaches the age of eighteen. It would be sufficient to complete the Mandel* decree by fixing the civil majority at eighteen for men and women and by laying it down that no payment of dowry is necessary for a valid marriage, and that no cases arising out of payment or non-payment of money or gifts may be brought before the tribunal.

To allow monogamists to live normally it is also necessary to give parental power jointly to both parents; to allow the mother to exercise guardianship over her children after her husband's death; to give the wife the right of inheritance of goods acquired during the marriage; to allow the husband to make a will in favour of his wife.

Legislative action must be accompanied by education and Soeur Marie-André suggests methods of getting the girls to come to school—amongst them is a proposal to send the boys home unless they bring their sisters! In the Cameroons, for instance, in the town schools the proportion of girls and boys is one to six, while in the villages it may be one to twenty. There are many divorces because young men find that uneducated wives no longer satisfy them.

There are many young people who ask only to live a Christian life and to found a home, and it is for these—so that they shall live a happier life—that Soeur Marie-André asked the help of the Alliance. She said she was only the mouthpiece of the girls of Africa who had confided to her their agony at the future that awaits them. She ended with a plea that we should be indeed the sisters of these women of Africa and do all in our power to ensure that there shall be respect for their human liberty, for their dignity as women and their nobility as mothers. They ask that we shall do something for them, that at least their daughters shall be less unhappy.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From the "Catholic Citizen," July-August, 1925.

We were glad to read in the *Woman Teacher* the report of the spirited protest made by our member, Miss Fortey, J.P., at a meeting of the Local Education Authority against a motion to adopt the Burnham Award. Miss Fortey, in an eloquent speech, voiced the claim of women for equal pay for equal work, a principle violated by the Award. She calculated that under the proposed scale of pay there would be after forty-four years' service a sum of £2,781 less paid to the woman than to the man. Councillor W. H. Smith associated himself with the protest. Equal pay for equal work is one of the mottoes of St. Joan's S.P.A. and of all feminist societies.—*Notes and Comments.*

* See Page 62.

Notes and Comments

WELCOME TO OUR AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS

July 29th was a beautiful summer's day when the Executive Committee of St. Joan's Alliance entertained the Australian members of the Alliance in London to a party in Hampstead. Members were present from the National Sections of Victoria, New South Wales and West Australia. It was a real joy to have with us sixteen friends who had come so far, some of whom met each other for the first time. We were also happy to welcome Mrs. de Silva, an old member of the Alliance from Ceylon.

The guest-speaker was Miss Chave Collisson, secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. After tea, the room upstairs was crowded to bursting point and some were sitting on the stairs as the Chairman, Miss Challoner, expressed the pleasure of the Alliance in Great Britain in meeting so many friends from overseas. She went on to say that had we known so many would be present we would have arranged the party in more spacious surroundings. Nevertheless, she thought it was fitting that they should meet in the home of the founder of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, Gabrielle Jeffery. Miss Challoner paid tribute to Miss Margaret Flynn who founded the Alliance in Australia in 1935. She said that Dame Vera Loughton Mathews sent apologies and regrets at not being able to be present owing to her absence abroad.

Greetings were given to the meeting by Mrs. O'Brien from Melbourne, by Miss Norma Bourke from Sydney and Miss Hoad from West Australia. Miss Chave Collisson then gave an illuminating address on the life and work of Josephine Butler and the part Australia can play in continuing her crusade. We hope to refer to this in a later issue. A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Shattock and seconded by Miss Monica O'Connor.

The party was a friendly, happy gathering in the true tradition of the Alliance and the inspiration and spirit of St. Joan was surely there.

The new nursing salary scales in fever hospitals show that men are to receive £10 a year higher maximum in some cases and an initial £10 a year in other cases.

It will be noted that male nurses in other nursing institutions receive £10 a year more than the female nurses.

It is very interesting to note that the Nursing Reconstruction Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Horder, says in its report, just published, that, "The principle of equal pay between men and women, with dependants' allowances and

equal opportunity for promotion, should be recognised as the only equitable long-term policy."

During the celebrations to take place at the end of September in honour of the restoration of the Hierarchy, there is to be a dinner on September 28th, to the Hierarchy and Visiting Bishops at Grosvenor House. As a happy afterthought women are to be admitted.

The International Federation of Business and Professional Women, under the presidency of Miss Sally Butler (U.S.A.) held its Congress in London early in August. On August 1st the Congress Banquet was held at the Guildhall, when the guests were welcomed by the President of the Board of Trade.

The new President is Dame Caroline Haslett, formerly President of the British Federation of Business and Professional Women.

We congratulate Mrs. Morgan (née Whittles) on the birth of her second son, Peter Jeremy, on July 9th, and wish him long life and happiness.

We ask the prayers of our readers for the Rev. Philip Northcote, Ph.D., who died on July 16th. Father Northcote was an associate member of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society and an ardent supporter of Woman Suffrage.—R.I.P.

We offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Stevens on the death of her husband.—R.I.P.

If any members still wish for accommodation in Rome during the Triennial Conference of St. Joan's International Alliance from October 1st-9th, they should apply at once to the office. There are a few vacancies left.

It seems early to speak of Christmas but it is not too early to ask members to keep Saturday, November 25th, free for St. Joan's Christmas Sale and to begin putting aside gifts for the various stalls. This year the proceeds will go to the *Catholic Citizen* which, over and above the heavy printing costs, has to meet an expensive account for the printing of the index and the binding of the volumes for the past ten years. Binding and indexing ceased in 1940, owing to the war, and we only resumed this item this year.

The office will be closed from August 15th to September 4th but correspondence will be attended to as usual.

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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Mrs. Pankhurst's Birthday

St. Joan's Alliance was well represented at the annual act of homage to Mrs. Pankhurst which the Suffragette Fellowship organised as usual on July 14th, the anniversary of her birthday.

The procession of those who remember filed past her statue in Victoria Gardens, until the wreaths of the Societies and the offerings of individuals formed a great mound of flowers at its foot. Many well-known figures were there, several wearing the prisoner's badge and the medal of the hunger-striker, and there was a group of school-girls who are being taught to recognise the debt they owe to the women who fought to make them free and responsible citizens. This year, too, the television apparatus will bring the scene into many homes, and show those who perhaps think the suffragettes are dead and gone, how very wrong they are.

The evening certainly proved how alive their spirit is to-day, and this was brought home to those gathered to hear speeches at St. Ermin's after the outdoor ceremony was over. Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, in the chair, said that all that many people know of the great woman's movement is that "once there were suffragettes—thank God that was over." To few, said Dame Vera, has it been given to change the course of history, but Mrs. Pankhurst was one of the few. They were paying tribute to one of England's greatest citizens. She was a flame of strength to all who knew her, a political genius, one who heard voices as surely as did St. Joan, and in obedience to them, threw herself with all her gifts into the fight for justice.

The most outstanding of her fellow-workers was, happily, still with us, and had come to pay tribute to her one-time leader. Dame Vera recalled how Lady Pethick Lawrence and her noble husband had worked for the cause; how she had seen her in the dock at the Old Bailey in 1912, and how when she (Dame Vera) had read the savage sentence she had said in her youthful exuberance: "They shall pay for this!"

Lady Pethick Lawrence spoke of Mrs. Pank-

hurst's passion and dedicated life, but reminded her hearers that the woman's movement had begun long before with Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Millicent Fawcett, and others too many to enumerate. She drew a beautiful parable from the rhythm of nature—how the seed comes to harvest and the harvest bears the new seed. Mrs. Pankhurst had brought the seed, sown by these pioneers, to harvest, and now the process must continue. The human race is on the march but there is still much for the women to do. They have achieved political equality as was witnessed by the presence of the women on the platform, but economic equality was still to be gained and after that there would be other seeds to bring to harvest.

The other speakers represented the three political parties. Miss Irene Ward, M.P. (Unionist) confessed that though she was early imbued with a passion for politics it was only after she had entered the House of Commons that she felt moved to carry on the torch of the woman's movement. Her personal recollections of Mrs. Pankhurst were of attending a meeting which she did not appreciate—when she was very young—and later of Mrs. Pankhurst telling her at which spot in the Albert Hall to speak so that her voice should carry. Later she realised that Mrs. Pankhurst was the Joan of Arc of this country and that a crusading spirit like hers was the one thing vital for the world.

Mrs. Barbara Castle, M.P. (Lab.) said she and others were trying to put to good use the opportunity Mrs. Pankhurst had made for them. There are still denials of right, but they are less obvious, less dramatic, and therefore less easy to combat in open and dramatic style. If there is now some lack of the crusading spirit, some lurking cynicism, there is also a general higher level of understanding in society of what is the true idea of the complete woman. If the women Members in Parliament disappoint those who fought to get them there, let these remember that emancipation is the gateway to wisdom, not its guarantee.

Women, she thought, have a genius for constructive unorthodoxy—their contribution must be made to humanity, they must add their special gifts to the solution of common problems. They must go forward to the enrichment of the legacy that Mrs. Pankhurst had left behind.

Mrs. Doreen Gorsky (Liberal candidate) quoted the Chairman's sentence as "Once there were suffragettes—thank God". She thanked the suffragettes for what they had done, she thanked those who were wearing their medals. There was a certain regret that the crusade was over—things were less definite now and therefore less easy. She said how marked was the increase in social reform since women had the vote, but reminded us that individual women had worked for social reform for a hundred years before they got the vote. She, had experienced a new and independent attitude of mind in women during the election, but there was a long way yet to go before equal status for women was achieved. The fight for equal pay for equal work was on—let the employers, she said, who are not philanthropists, judge whether the work is equal. She spoke, too, of the struggle for equal status in marriage and in moral standards. She said since women were now equal partners in Parliament they must act as a spearhead for the reforms that were still due.

It was not an evening of mere reminiscence, far from it—the spirit of the suffragettes stirred in the air and all who breathed it were invigorated for the tasks ahead.

PHYLLIS C. CHALLONER.

BANTU FAMILY LIFE

We are happy to publish extracts from the speech given by Miss Eleanor Hawarden recently at Johannesburg to the Transvaal Section of St. Joan's Alliance. Miss Hawarden is no stranger to the Alliance. She spoke on our platform in London in 1938 with the Archdeacon of Kavirondo and Miss Eleanor Rathbone, at the public meeting at the Caxton Hall against Forced Marriages of African Girls. She afterwards accompanied the deputation from St. Joan's Alliance which was received by Lord Dufferin and Ava, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Miss Hawarden said:

"There is no stability in the present unions existing between non-Europeans; some are legally married, but most are not—neither according to their own customs nor according to the legal requirements of Europeans.

"Desertion of mother and children by the husband is universal, and so commonplace that no one thinks anything of it. Wives in the reserves are often deserted by husbands who go to towns to seek work. They may hear from them

for several months and receive money, but then there is silence. Some go to the towns to find their husbands but are seldom, if ever, successful. Thus a family is broken up; the wife finds work and the children are handed over to the grandmother. They are either neglected, or, at best, grow up in an unstable environment.

"On the other hand, wives in reserves are often unfaithful; there is such a tremendous disproportion of the sexes there. The greater number of able-bodied males are absent for long periods, and only old men, women and children remain. In the absence of the men the women make an attempt to keep the farms going and to rear the children, and in consequence, do justice to neither.

"No social stigma is attached to immorality and instability of family life. Illegitimacy is a test of the stability of family life; no official figures have been compiled on this subject but records of the Bridgman Memorial Hospital for non-Europeans show that sixty per cent. of the births there are from unmarried mothers. The incidence of venereal disease is very high and this applies particularly to urban areas, though it is steadily growing in rural areas as well.

"A recently appointed Marriage Advisory Bureau in Johannesburg exists to analyse problems of European marriages. Such a bureau in a Native township would be almost laughable. It is clear that investigating such problems as neurosis, drinking, incompatibility, etc., would be quite ineffectual, for their problem is far greater; the whole set-up of marriage and family life has no secure basis at all, nor any sense of permanency.

"Migrant labour is the chief cause of this insecurity. Johannesburg, and indeed the whole Reef, exists in conditions worse than those of a seaport where the occasional influx of men leads to serious problems. No one thinks with undue alarm of the fact that there is a constant disproportion of the sexes along the Reef. The figures for Springs, for instance, show that the ratio of non-European men to women is 9.4 to 1. True, many of these men work on the mines, but they are nevertheless young men and cannot be expected to live a life of chastity for fifteen months on end. There have been Commissions to investigate all aspects of Bantu life (mainly economic), but none to investigate family life and the reasons for its breakdown.

"Stable labour is possible. It would save the Reserves by providing a permanent farm labour of able men. It would benefit towns by improving the productivity of native labour and its efficiency. A big turnover of labour has been proved inefficient and bad management, yet it exists in every urban centre."

In conclusion, Miss Hawarden suggested that St. Joan's Alliance might agitate for a survey or Commission on Bantu family life.

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT.

This month, of course, the most important topic discussed by Parliament was Korea, with its corollaries of Civil Defence and Defence proper, with all the serious implications which arise.

Turning to our own subjects, the Lords' Maintenance Bill was considered and given its Third Reading on July 14th. It is admitted to be something of a patching process, but it will certainly relieve some of the worst hardships suffered and, as Mr. Ede said, "will help a good many women to get money they would otherwise not have got."

On July 12th the prospect of the Census next year was greeted, as anything bordering on snooping always is greeted in Parliament, with considerable suspicion. In particular some members were dubious about the plan, stated to be necessary for the compilation of birthrate and birth incidence statistics, to ask women under 50 who have been married more than once, about the date of their first marriages. Mr. Galbraith was very reassuring about the confidential nature of the information and promised to take further steps to improve the methods by which this is ensured.

The Finance Bill, report stage, on July 4th included an amendment taking away the right to distrain a husband's goods in respect of a wife's income tax, in view of the fact that the Commissioners can now have recourse to the wife herself.

On the 13th Lieut-Colonel Lipton asked about the possibility of discussing the suggestion for a Royal Commission on Marriage Laws, which has the support of over 100 members on both sides of the House. Mr. Morrison was not optimistic.

Dr. Summerskill was involved in a somewhat awkward incident on July 19th when, as national president of the Six Point Group she found herself associated with a circular criticizing Government policy in Korea. The Prime Minister said: "She has not for some time played any active part in this organisation and has not attended a meeting for over two years. She was, of course, quite unaware of the contents of the document. As soon as she saw it, she resigned both from the presidency and from her membership of the Group."

Miss Ward, no doubt on the principle of losing no conceivable opportunity, reminded the Prime Minister about Equal Pay, in a somewhat unexpected supplementary.

We note with pleasure that in answer to a question by Mr. J. Hynd on July 24th, Mr. Griffiths stated that among the constitutional reforms to be introduced into the Windward Islands is universal adult suffrage.

On June 28th Mr. Alport asked the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs: "How many

qualified African women teachers are employed in schools of all types in each of the East and Central African territories; and what is the ratio between boy and girl students at the schools in question." Mr. Cook promised to supply written information as soon as he could obtain it. We shall be interested to see the report when it comes.

The question of Education was discussed on July 17th, and two of the members who caught Mr. Speaker's eye and spoke, raised with force and sympathy the financial case for the Catholic schools, although neither Mr. Lever, member for Manchester, Ardwick, nor Mr. Donald Scott, member for Penrith and the Border, is himself a Catholic.

Mr. Edward Wakefield introduced a somewhat lighthearted note into the proceedings on July 10th when he asked the Foreign Secretary: "What uniform has been prescribed for use on ceremonial occasions by female members of His Majesty's Foreign Service?" Mr. Ernest Davies replied: "It has not been deemed necessary or advisable to prescribe a uniform for lady members of His Majesty's Foreign Service." Whereupon Mr. Wakefield pursued: "Will the Minister consider the suggestion that has been made to substitute brooches for breeches?" Mr. Davies again refused to be drawn into so dangerous a controversy, he said: "That suggestion is being considered. There has been no pressure for these uniforms. We would not like to prescribe in the matter of ladies' dresses."

On Friday, July 28th, the House adjourned till October 17th.
B. M. HALPERN.

MANDEL DECREE June 15th, 1939.

The text of the Mandel Decree to which reference is made on page 58 is as follows:

Art. 1. In French East Africa and French West Africa no marriage can be contracted before the woman has completed her fourteenth, the man his sixteenth year.

Art. 2. The consent of the future spouses is indispensable to the validity of the marriage.

The following shall be declared null and void, and the party considering himself injured by the declaration of nullity shall not be able to reclaim indemnity.

(1) Every marriage contract made for a girl who has not reached puberty, with or without the girl's consent.

(2) All marriage contracts made without the consent of the girl who has reached puberty.

(3) Every claim on a widow or any other woman inherited by native custom, if the woman refuses to go to the inheritor to whom she is assigned.

In 1939 Soeur Marie-André spoke before the Missionary Group of the Chamber of Deputies. The Group adopted Soeur Marie-André's recommendations and urged their acceptance by Monsieur Mandel, the Colonial Minister, who embodied them in the above decree, which was passed unanimously through the Chamber of Deputies.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Czechoslovakia. We are deeply distressed to learn of the execution of Milada Horakova, friend and true disciple of Frantiska Plaminkova. They were together in the Terezin camp under Nazi occupation, and when her leader was executed for her patriotic resistance, Milada Horakova lived to carry on her work for their country. She became a Deputy in 1945. She was President of the National Council of Women of Czechoslovakia, which is affiliated to the International Alliance of Women.

When the new Czech Government threatened to treat this patriot as the Nazis had treated her friend—Senator Plaminkova—St. Joan's International Alliance, in common with other organisations all over the world, made representations to the United Nations asking for their intervention, but the sentence of death was carried out.

France. The Minister of Health, replying to a question by Madame Poinso-Chapuis, in the National Assembly on June 12th, reported a decrease of venereal disease. In 1947 the number of cases of syphilis was 29 per 100,000 inhabitants, falling to 21 in 1948, and 11 in 1949.

Le Droit des Femmes points out that these authoritative figures give the lie to those who maintain, in good faith or not, that the closing of the maisons tolérées has brought about an increase in venereal disease.

The Minister of Reconstruction stated that 97 maisons de tolérance in the Department of the Seine, which were closed in consequence of the 1946 law, had since been adapted to provide accommodation for 249 families and 284 students.

Germany. We record with regret the death in Berlin of Dr. Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, whom we had the pleasure of meeting during her visit to England in 1946.

She was a great woman and a powerful influence amongst her fellow countrywomen, pre-eminently in her work for the equal moral standard. She was the Josephine Butler of Germany.

South Africa. Our member Mrs. Maytom, Deputy-Mayor of Durban, asks for prayers in her struggle to avert the disaster of the dismissal of 350 Indians, employed by the Municipal Council, as a result of their absents themselves from work on June 26th. This day was appointed by the Indian and African bodies to be used for prayer and mourning as a protest against the new Group Areas Act, which is designed to segregate the different racial groups into special areas.

The International Abolitionist Federation will hold its 18th Congress in Rome, October 28th-30th, when it will celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Status of Women Commission. The fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held at Lake Success from May 8th-19th. Under the able chairmanship of Madame Lefauchaux (France) the Committee held eighteen plenary meetings and finished its work in record time.

Thirteen members attended; the representatives of Haiti and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were absent. Many of the Non-Governmental Organisations were represented.

The Commission adopted a resolution for submission to the Economic and Social Council on the Political Rights of Women, after pointing out that twenty countries still denied equal political rights to women. It requested the Secretary-General to prepare for submission to the Commission at its next session a Draft Convention on the granting of equal political rights with men.

Another resolution requested the Economic and Social Council:

- (a) To take appropriate measures, as soon as possible, to ensure the granting of a convention of nationality of married women, embodying the following principles:
- (i) There shall be no distinction based on sex, as regards nationality, in legislation or in practice;
 - (ii) Neither marriage nor its dissolution shall affect the nationality of either spouse. Nothing in such a convention shall preclude the parties to it from making provision for the voluntary naturalisation of aliens married to their nationals;
- (b) To instruct the appropriate bodies of the United Nations to give consideration to the problem of the transmission of nationality to children from either the father or the mother on the basis of equality.

Information was requested from Governments, Specialised Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations for consideration at the next session of the Commission, of the Property Rights of Married Women and of Family Law. Regarding the application of penal law for women, the hope was expressed "that there should be no discrimination against women in penal law and its application." Other resolutions dealt with Educational Opportunities for Women and the Participation of Women in the Work of the United Nations.

No specific resolution was passed at this session on Equal Pay "in view of the study being undertaken by the I.L.O." Finally, the members of the Commission expressed their deep concern at the plight of Greek mothers whose children had been abducted and hoped that the action already taken by the UN and the International Red Cross would result in "the prompt repatriation of the children so as to put an end to the agony of the Greek mothers."

REVIEWS

Saints and Heroes for Boys. By Doris Burton, illustrated by Rosemary de Souza. (Sands, 6s.)

This is a very readable little book. It tells the stories of a number of saints and saintly men whose lives were particularly adventurous or heroic.

Possibly the device of making two imaginary characters tell each other most of the story in the form of dialogue is sometimes a little forced, but for the most part the stories flow easily and well, they are told interestingly and are by no means over-sweet.

The more modern lives are perhaps better suited to the style. St. John Bosco and Father Damien I thought were particularly good. St. Joan—"foolproof" though her story is—I find hard to make convincingly human in so short a space, and St. Thomas More, too, though sympathetically drawn seems to lose stature when the background can only be so summarily sketched in.

But these criticisms are really too stern. It is a good little book and should certainly appeal to children—girls as well as boys. B.M.H.

Hunt and Die. The prospect for the Aborigines of Australia. By M. M. Bennett. (The Anti-Slavery Society, 1s.)

To all primitive peoples the prospect of hunting or dying is of course familiar. Mrs. Bennett's thesis in this pamphlet is that the primitive peoples of Australia, deprived of large tracts of their hunting grounds, and for the most part unable to earn a living by industry, are now driven to seek a living by hunting under impossible conditions.

The hunting life has become too hard even for the physically fit; it involves a march of often twenty miles, with the constant stalking of the animal and the transport of the carcass to the evening meeting place. For the old and the ailing it means death—they are left behind. For women with children to carry it is the direct cause of infanticide.

Missionaries of various denominations have trained the Aborigines successfully in the pursuits of a more settled life and there are far-reaching Government schemes for their education. A vital factor here, as elsewhere, is an increase amongst the white population of a sense of responsibility towards the Aborigines. P.C.C.

BOOK RECEIVED.

Darwin Is Not For Children. By Vera Barclay. Foreword by Kenneth de Courcy. (Herbert Jenkins. 9s. 6d.)

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