

# 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. XXXIX No. 10.

15th OCTOBER, 1953.

Price Fourpence.

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.

## More Ammunition

By P. C Challoner, M.A.

In 1947 the International African Institute and the Department of Social and Economic Research of the International Missionary Council, decided to investigate, in Africa south of the Sahara, "the effect of modern contacts on African marriage customs and the maintenance of family life," by "an objective study of such documentary evidence as is afforded by socio-anthropological studies, Government Ordinances, Church and Mission rules and records, and Native Court records."\*

The work of the three eminent scholars—Dr. Lucy Mair, Mr. Arthur Phillips, and the Rev. Lyndon Harries, on the sociological, legal and administrative, and religious (missionary) aspect respectively, command the respect and gratitude of all who are concerned with the problems of changing Africa.

When research is directed to so vast a field it is only to be expected that we shall find a bewildering variety of customs and uses in such a subject as marriage and family life, but there are certain distinguishing features of African society, underlying all differences, which emerge from this monumental survey.

Among these is the "toleration or even approval accorded to polygamy;" the institution commonly called bride-price; and the collective aspect of the marriage transaction and relationship.

As regards polygamy, all Christians (some indigenous Churches excepted) condemn it, but not all act alike in their discipline. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself said:—"The subject of marriage affords one of the outstanding instances of the confusion caused by differences in discipline." On the other hand it is confessed that nothing hinders conversion so much as strictness in this matter, while lapses of professing Christians into polygamy are widespread.

In Portuguese territory polygamy is forbidden in urban areas, and in Belgian territory areas and occupations are reserved for monogamists. In the early days of colonisation it was held to be "repugnant to civilised practice," in many parts, but in South Africa and certain other territories it

is not held to be repugnant to the newer criterion of "public policy and natural justice." It is pointed out in this study that in general the attitude towards native custom appears to be changing, the aim being "assimilation rather than radical displacement," and though this has not yet been applied to polygamy itself (except as remarked above) certain social practices associated with the practice are retained—among them the bride-price.

Polygamy is not only a way of life opposed to morality but one which depends on the exploitation of women; and the bride-price is now accepted as "a custom analogous to slavery." Bride-price (bogadi) is described by an aged African, the Rev. L. Lekalake, as "a mutual contract between two families. On the side of the bridegroom's family every male who contributes to the bogadi is, ipso facto, entitled to a share of the woman by sexual intercourse. This is so during the life of the bridegroom, and after his death she is taken by the remaining males, to raise up seed to the dead." If the woman dies or is childless her family must make up the deficiency in the same manner. "Some people say this is not the purchase of a woman . . . it is more. It is the purchase by one family of the reproductive fertility of as many women as may be necessary, from the other family. The particular woman is an incident only to this contract."

There are missionaries who are not in favour of an absolute condemnation of bride-price, because in some regions it has kept its traditional meaning, and does stabilise marriage, but the Rev. Lyndon Harries, who was a missionary in Africa from 1935-45 says:—"The Christian emphasis on the importance of the individual cannot be reconciled with a system which has its meaning in the primary importance of the clan."

Bride-price is scarcely compatible with true marriage and modern conditions have only emphasised evils inherent in the system. To fix a maximum bride-price by law, or to write it on a marriage licence, or to make a government grant to enable a monogamist to get a wife, is to crystallise a custom that is in fact dying out. "Africans, to whom legal status means so much, accept such a procedure (e.g. recording bride-

\*Survey of African Marriage and Family Life. Edited with an introduction by Arthur Phillips. (Oxford University Press, 45s.)



price on the marriage certificate) as proof that it is essential even in marriage according to Christian rites."

Two other evils inherent in this custom are child marriage and inheritance of widows, of which members of St. Joan's Alliance have already heard much. It is perhaps true to say that it is child betrothal rather than child marriage that is the evil to tackle, for the betrothed child will find it difficult to refuse the marriage later on when this involves the return of the bride-price long since expended. The father wanting bride-price for his son's marriage, the brother waiting on cattle from his sister's marriage to get him a wife, the maternal uncle anxious to cash-in on his nieces, greedy parents and rich polygamists all tend to increase the evil of child betrothal. Some who would not prohibit this custom try to provide safeguards—but there is a curious lack of realism in such a provision as "there shall be no cohabitation before puberty and free choice later," when it is the regular custom in certain tribes for small girls to be sent to the hut of their betrothed (generally a grown, if not an old man) to learn the duties of a wife, and to be snatched back just in time to prevent the disgrace of pregnancy before initiation. (Sex relations before marriage are general in African tribal society.)

How is it possible for Christianity to make terms with such practices? It does not attempt to make terms with immoral practices in modern society elsewhere, and the great number of Christian Africans would not wish that it should do so in Africa. The best hope for the future is to encourage Africans themselves to direct the development of African life, to enlist their help in the purifying, where possible, of the customs they have inherited and in the abolition of those which are evil. Governor-General Eboué, of French Equatorial Africa, himself an African, encouraged the Colonial administration to facilitate the evolution of customs in the Christian sense by recognising Christian practice as one of the local customs of Equatorial Africa. This evolution is apparently already taking place in Belgian Africa as a result of the decree of 1945 protecting monogamous marriage. Some African authorities can be relied on to act on enlightened principles and many native courts recognise and uphold Christian marriage.

Those who are engaged in the fight to raise the status of the women of Africa owe an immense debt to the men and women whose research gives them such valuable ammunition.

**Canada.** Madame Marianne Beauchamp Jodoin is the first French Canadian woman to become a Senator. Madame Jodoin has long been known for her public work and for devotion to the welfare of deaf mutes.—*La Bonne Parole*.

### FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

From the Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance held in London in September 1952 a Petition was sent to the Trusteeship Council expressing satisfaction at the inclusion in the Questionnaire addressed by the Council to Administering Authorities, of a question regarding the violation of the physical integrity of women. It expressed the hope that the Council, in collaboration with the Administering Authorities, "will immediately take measures to promote the progressive abolition of the custom in all Trust Territories."

The Petition was examined by the Standing Committee on Petitions which recommended a resolution for adoption by the Trusteeship Council. At its 81st meeting the committee was informed by the Belgian representative for the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi, that cases of violation of physical integrity of women were unknown in that Territory; even if cases were to occur according to custom, such a custom would be considered to be contrary to public order and hence the acts committed would fall within the scope of the provisions of the Penal Code.

It is with great satisfaction that the Alliance has been notified by the Trusteeship Council of the following resolution which was adopted by the Council on July 20th, 1953 by eleven votes in favour, none against, with one abstention.

The Trusteeship Council acting under Article 87b of the Charter and in accordance with its rules of procedure, having accepted and examined at its twelfth session the petition from St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance (T/Pet. General/22) having taken note of the relevant report of the Standing Committee on Petitions (T/L.368, section LL) recalling that the Council has included in its questionnaire a question regarding the violation of the physical integrity of women, 1. *Decides* to draw the attention of the Administering Authorities to the petition and to take up this question during the annual examination of conditions in those Trust Territories where the custom complained of may exist; 2. *Invites* the Secretary-General to inform the Administering Authorities and the petitioners of this resolution in accordance with rule 93 of the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council and, further, to transmit to the petitioners the official records of the public meetings of the Trusteeship Council at which the question raised by the petitioners may be discussed.

### Going Abroad?

#### "Stonevale Keywords and Keyphrases"

will solve all your language difficulties.

"As Easy as A.B.C." French, German, Spanish, Italian. 1/- each. All booksellers. Or direct (post only)

**STONEVALE PUBLICATIONS, LTD.,**  
Dept. C.C. 59, SLOANE STREET, S.W.1.

## Notes and Comments

The Annual Mass for the repose of the souls of members, associates and benefactors of St. Joan's Alliance will be offered at St. Patrick's Soho, on Sunday, November 1st, at 10.30. We ask members and friends to make a special effort to be present.

Recently a case before a Juvenile Court at Sutton, Surrey, in which twenty-six children were involved, was adjourned because only two women magistrates were available. One man and one woman would have been in order to try the case, or two men alone, but *not* two women alone. This is the result of the rules governing the composition of Juvenile Courts outside the Metropolitan area.

St Joan's Alliance and other women's organisations have protested continually against this stupid and insulting ruling.

We congratulate the Rt. Hon. Florence Horsbrugh on having at last been given Cabinet rank. Whatever the reason for the omission, whether due to her sex or to failure of the Government to recognise the importance of education, we rejoice that the matter has been put right.

The time for collecting signatures for the Equal Pay Petition has been extended. We hope members will not slacken their efforts, for, in spite of the boredom of carrying on in the face of continued frustration, we must give the Government no peace till justice is done.

The Hon. Mrs. Evelyn Emmet is again this year one of the delegates from the United Kingdom to the General Assembly of the United Nations. She has been adopted as Unionist candidate for East Grinstead.

Members of the Alliance had the pleasure of entertaining Mrs. Tenison-Woods, chief of Section of the Status of Women Commission, at a Sherry Party kindly given for the Alliance by Miss D. J. Collier, F.R.C.S. in August. With her came some of the Catholic delegates attending the Conference of the International Federation of University Women held in London. Among these were Professor Frances Moran, president of the I.F.U.W., and Regius Professor of Laws at Trinity College, Dublin; Dr. Aileen Noonan, Town Councillor of Mount Forest, Canada; Dr. M. de las Lux Gravas, from Mexico; and Miss McGillicuddy a member of the Alliance from New York. Guests were privileged to have a friendly talk from Mrs. Tenison-Woods, one of the founders of the Alliance in New South Wales, who spoke of the Status of Women Commission for which she has done such distinguished work.

**France.** Sister Marie Suzanne of the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary has succeeded in isolating the leprous bacillus and obtaining an anti-toxin from rats which, so far, appears to be giving excellent results. Sister Marie Suzanne spoke on her research in Rome at the Congress on Microbiology. Professor Giuseppe Penso, head of the Microbiology Institutes of Rome University, suggested the bacillus should be called "Microbacterium Marianum", after Sister Marie, and this was agreed. Sister Marie Suzanne will also speak at the Leprosy Congress in Madrid.

We ask the prayers of our readers for the soul of Mrs. Murtagh who died in Melbourne on August 8th, after a year of intense suffering. She was the enthusiastic treasurer of St. Joan's Alliance when it was founded in Melbourne in 1936. One of her last acts was to send her subscription for two years. Members will remember the enthusiasm of Marie Carroll, as she then was, when she took part in the pilgrimage of the Alliance to Walsingham in 1939, to thank Our Lady for the granting of the vote twenty-one years before, and to ask a blessing on the Woman's Movement.

We also ask prayers for Miss Sylvia Gricveson of Bournemouth, a member for thirty years, who died on September 13th, 1952; and for Mrs. Wickham of Hove, a member for twenty-five years who died in February this year. (We have only just learned of their deaths.)—R.I.P.

**Australia. New South Wales.** On September 7th the N.S.W. Executive had the pleasure of meeting Dame Leslie Whateley, D.B.E., Director of World Bureau of Girl Guides, who was on an official visit to Australia. She accepted an invitation to an informal luncheon party at the delightful home of Mrs. Witton Flynn, on the heights of Bellevue Hill. Dame Leslie chatted informally with individual members and later gave a short talk on her experiences in other countries she had visited, as far afield as Lebanon, Burma and Mexico.

Victoria has ratified the Convention on Equal Pay, and it is expected that other States will do so in the near future. A deputation to discuss the situation was recently received by the Minister of Labour of Victoria when Miss Flynn represented St. John's Alliance.

Our congratulations go to our member Mrs. Morgan (née Whittles) on the birth of her third son Andrew Timothy on September 18th. All blessings on him!



## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "The Catholic Citizen"

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

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Ex-officio* DAME VERA LAUGHTON MATHEWS, D.B.E., *President, St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance*  
 MISS P. C. CHALLONER, M.A., *Chairman.*  
 MISS F. A. BARRY, *Hon. Secretary.*  
 MISS PAULINE M. BRANDT.  
 MISS NOREEN K. CARR, *Hon. Treasurer.*  
 MISS GABRIELLE DAYE.  
 MISS VERA DOUÏE.  
 MISS GUESSARD, B.A.

MRS. HALPERN, B.A.  
 MRS. ISABEL POWELL HEATH, M.B., Ch.B.  
 LADY HILLS.  
 MRS. JACKSON, B.A.  
 MISS NANCY STEWART PARNELL, B.A.  
 MRS. SHATTOCK, M.A., M.D., D.P.M.  
 MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor,*  
 "The Catholic Citizen."

### à Paris

Le Congrès annuel de St. Joan's a eu lieu les 29 et 30 Août dernier, à Paris, dans l'ambiance agréable et studieuse que connaissent bien et apprécient toutes les délégations, qui chaque année se retrouvent dans les capitales de l'Europe.

La France était très fière d'accueillir les délégations venant de très loin (nous pensons à nos amies australiennes) . . . les autres aussi bien sûr, et a voulu, avant de commencer les travaux, leur faire hommage et les mettre au coeur même de sa capitale, par une visite à l' Hôtel de Ville.

Reçues officiellement par l'Accueil de Paris, les congressistes ont pu admirer salons, tapisseries, peintures tableaux et évoquer sous la conduite d'une jeune guide, particulièrement érudite, tout un passé historique depuis Lutèce à nos jours, en passant par les jours glorieux de la Libération de Paris.

Ce que furent ensuite les séances de travail, ne saurait mieux l'exprimer qu'en se reportant au compte-rendu technique des rapports présentés par Miss Barry, sous la Présidence de Dame Vera Laughton Mathews.

Précision des exposés, malgré le détail et la complexité des problèmes posés, discussions et résolutions nettes, dans lesquelles chacune s'est efforcée de rester objective et sans jamais dépasser le cadre intéressant les activités de St. Joan's.

De la part de toutes, une attention, une compréhension, indiquant leur formation et le reflet d'une action qui fait honneur à toutes les femmes, quand celles-ci veulent bien regarder au delà, non seulement de leur propre maison, mais s'intéresser à la condition humaine au delà des frontières et des mers.

C'est ensuite avec plaisir que nous nous sommes retrouvées au siège de l'Alliance Jeanne d'Arc Avenue Gabriel, en une réception amicale, groupant autour de Viola Pesson-Depret et Marie-José Russo, de nombreuses amies parisiennes. Soeur Marie-André du Sacré Coeur et Soeur Stanislaus dont personne n'ignore les

travaux et l'action pour l'amélioration des conditions des femmes d'Outre Mer ont intéressé très vivement l'auditoire par des souvenirs récents glanés çà et là, pendant leurs séjours en Afrique.

Le Dimanche matin, nous nous recueillions toutes ensemble dans la chapelle des Soeurs Blanches d'Afrique pour la Messe aux intentions de l'Alliance et à la mémoire des pionnières qui nous ont précédés.

Deux séances encore ce dimanche, réception le dimanche soir sur le "Vivanti" de Dame Vera, croisière sur la Seine, tour de l'Île St Louis et de la Cité. Accueil affectueux de notre Présidente et toujours et partout, joie de se retrouver, de se reconnaître, d'échanger, dans la simplicité et le désir d'une action valable et profonde.

Le lundi . . . Un car attendait les congressistes Place de la Concorde pour les emmener à Rouen. Rouen n'est pas que la capitale de la Normandie, ni la patrie de Corneille, elle est surtout la ville où le souvenir de Jeanne d'Arc est le plus vivant. C'est là que nos amies, en parcourant les rues, en visitant ses monuments et ses musées ont senti intérieurement et plus intensément sans doute les leçons à tirer de la vie et de la mort de la petite bergère qui fut le courage et la grandeur personnifiés.

Ce n'est pas par hasard que Ste Jeanne d'Arc est la Patronne de notre Association. A vous toutes, mes amies de tous les continents, de vous en souvenir. Ensemble, qui que nous soyions, ne nous arrêtons pas aux difficultés ou aux incompréhensions, et restons dignes de Jeanne la bergère . . . et du grand capitaine.

### Marthe Gouffé

We are greatly indebted to Madame Gouffé for her lively impressions of our Paris Conference. At the Conference it was decided to publish articles in French from time to time in *The Catholic Citizen*. We are happy to have such a good send-off from the Treasurer of St. Joan's

International and we hope to print many more such articles.

The resolutions passed by St. Joan's International Council Meeting will be found on page 70. They give the substance of the decisions and discussions undertaken at the working sessions of the Meeting which was held at the Cenacle Convent, Paris.

On September 21st some of the delegates to the Conference reported the activities to members of the Alliance in London.

Dame Vera Laughton Mathews gave a birds-eye view of the work done. She mentioned, among other things, Mademoiselle Lenoël's fine defence of feminism in the French periodical *Psyche*. We had sent her congratulations on this excellent achievement, regretting her absence at the Council Meeting. Dame Vera underlined the fact that members and National Sections should keep a watching brief in ways such as this; they should give way to a "divine discontent" and not remain quiet and unobserved. She told the meeting of those present in Paris, regretting that Frau Brauksiepe, president of our German Section, could not be present owing to her election campaign, but recording our satisfaction at the presence of Dr. Bonnemann, delegate from Germany. Our thanks had been sent to Madame Leroy-Boy (Belgium) for her work for the Alliance at the Human Rights Commission and the N.G.O. Conference in Geneva. National Sections had been asked to urge their Governments to comment favourably on the draft Nationality Convention of the Status of Women Commission. Dame Vera, in referring to the Petition to the Trusteeship Council (reported on page 66) emphasised how well worth while were our Conferences. Referring to domestic decisions made at the Council Meeting, she mentioned how the Meeting had reluctantly come to the conclusion that a change in the Constitution should be made that "the Council will meet at least once in two years", instead of every year.

For the first time South Australia had sent a delegate to the Council Meeting, their President Mrs. Dwyer, who was the next speaker. She said she was overwhelmed by all the work being done by St. Joan's International Alliance and she was amazed by the economy with which it was achieved. She said she would go back to Australia with a realisation of the full meaning of what is recorded in cold print in *The Catholic Citizen*.

Miss Spender spoke of the party given by Madame Pesson-Depret at her lovely flat off the Champs Elysées and of Soeur Marie-André's valuable talk. Soeur Marie-André had generously coupled the work of the Alliance for African women with that of the White Sisters and had urged us not to slacken our efforts.

Miss Nell Taylor, delegate from Victoria, ex-

pressed her pleasure that the Council Meeting had stressed the necessity of equal education for all. She had been greatly inspired by the Conference and would return to Australia full of vigour for St. Joan's.

Mrs. Jackson recounted the reception given to delegates at the Town Hall and the delightful final party given by Dame Vera Laughton Mathews on her yacht *Vivanti*, after a trip on the Seine.

Miss Lightfoot from Sydney said that she had been struck by the combining of the fight for equality with the spiritual and religious outlook. Both, she felt, were necessary. She declared that she had had "a whale of a time!"

Miss Guessard described the pilgrimage to St. Joan's shrine in Rouen and the visit to the Cathedral, so terribly damaged in the war, but now being rapidly reconstructed under *Les Beaux Arts*. The *Chanoine* Delamare had shown us the site, in St. Joan's Chapel, of the window to be erected as a memorial from England to St. Joan. Miss Guessard went on to tell how the artist Max Ingrand had received some of the English delegates in his studio in Paris and shown them the design of the window, and the processes undertaken in the workshop to produce the stained glass.

At Rouen, said Miss Guessard, a visit was made to the tiny Memorial Chapel of St. Joan off the market place, and finally delegates assembled at the beautiful statue of St. Joan in the Market Place, where flowers were placed and prayers were recited for the Alliance.

Miss Challoner, from the Chair, spoke of the heartening work of the National Sections which had been reported at the Council Meeting. Delegates, she said, were loud in their praise of Miss Baetens (Belgium) who had translated during the sessions. To Madame Russo, President of the French Section, she wished to express the gratitude of the Conference, not least for her hospitality in harbouring herself and the four delegates from Australia.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell in an eloquent speech and seconded by Miss Lovell Burgess,

**Blessed Robert Southwell, S.J. A Play.** By Marguerite Fedden. (The Burleigh Press, Bristol, 5s.)

This little play is based on episodes in the Martyr's life and personally I learned a lot about Blessed Robert Southwell in the reading. Much of his poetry is quoted and he is shown as a man of letters as well as a movingly devoted shepherd of the sheep. The last scene which brings the play to an effective close is well imagined. The play is short enough to be a useful addition to the repertoire of Catholic Schools. C.S.



## RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING OF ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE, PARIS, 1953

### I. Draft International Covenants on Human Rights

(1). St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance regrets that Article 22 of the Draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the Ninth Session of the Human Rights Commission is weaker in regard to equality in marriage than the respective Article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Alliance expresses the hope that the Human Rights Commission will take action (i) to restore the positive provisions of Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that legislation shall provide for equality of rights and duties between the spouses instead of being only "directed towards" such equality; (ii) to insert a clause defining "marriageable age" as being not less than 14 for boys and girls.

(2). St. Joan's Alliance regrets that the Human Rights Commission rejected the proposal to permit groups and individuals to petition the Commission in respect of the violation of human rights and expresses the hope that this decision may be reconsidered by the Commission or other appropriate body of the United Nations.

(3). St. Joan's Alliance reiterates its request that Article 7 of the Draft Covenant on Civil and Political Rights be amended to read:

"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. No one shall be subjected to medical or scientific experimentation without his free consent.

The Alliance expresses the hope that this Article will be so amended when further consideration is given to the terms of the Draft Covenant on Human Rights.

(4). The Alliance calls upon its National Sections to urge their Governments to support the above proposals.

### II. Status of Women

St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance is particularly concerned with Questions 91 (dealing with physical integrity) and 96 (dealing with marriage) of the revised questionnaire of the Trusteeship Council adopted on June 6th, 1952. It therefore notes with satisfaction that the Economic and Social Council has acceded to the request of the Status of Women Commission and has drawn the attention of the Trusteeship Council to the Resolution of this commission, expressing the hope that the Administering Authorities responsible for the administration of the Trust Territories will reply in detail to the questions regarding the Status of Women in their Annual Reports to the Assembly.

### III. Slavery

St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance calls upon its National Sections to urge their Governments to support the proposal of the United Nations Economic and Social Council to draw up a supplementary Convention to the International Slavery Convention of 1926—such a Convention to take into consideration the points contained in the Recommendation B (E. 1988) of the Committee of Experts, particularly (d) and (e), i.e.

(d) the practice whereby a woman is given in marriage, without the right to refuse, at a price and under conditions which give to the husband, to his clan or his family, a right of disposition over herself and over her children and permit her exploitation for the advantage of others;

(e) the practice whereby a child is transferred by its parents or guardians to a third party on payment or under conditions permitting the exploitation of the child regardless of its welfare.

The Alliance further asks that the preliminary draft of such a Convention be prepared by a Committee of Experts on Slavery.

### IV. Education

(1). St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance reaffirms its belief that it is essential for a peaceful democracy that education should be based on religious and spiritual values.

(2). St. Joan's Alliance urges all Governments and also Administering Authorities in Trust Territories to ensure that in all schemes of education, equal opportunities shall be available for boys and girls, men and women, irrespective of religion or race.

(3). St. Joan's Alliance deplors the attitude of the XVth Joint International Conference on Public Education of UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education concerning the access of women to education, which considers that boys and girls have different scholastic aptitudes. The Alliance believes that the aim of education is to develop the whole personality, and that each child has the right to develop his or her particular talents to the highest possible degree, and furthermore that both boys and girls need preparation for home-making, in the widest sense, and for the duties of parenthood.

(4) St. Joan's Alliance in stressing the importance of the full participation of Catholic women in public life, urges the Missionary Orders to take full advantage of all opportunities for the higher education of girls.

### INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

**Belgium.** At last women police have become a reality in Belgium. The decision to appoint women police was made in December 1948. Now in September 1953, three women have been appointed from among 312 candidates. *La Cité* regrets that so little enthusiasm has been shown for the introduction of women police, more especially as neighbouring countries have had them for several years.

\* \* \*

**Germany.** Of five hundred members of the new Bundestag, forty-five are women. Of these twenty-one belong to the Social Democrats; nineteen are Christian Democrats; three are Free Democrats and two are of the Refugee Party.

We congratulate Frau Aenne Brauksiepe, President of the German Section of St. Joan's Alliance, on her re-election for Cologne. We also congratulate Frau Elizabeth Pitz who has been newly elected to the Bundestag and is a member of St. Joan's.

\* \* \*

**United Nations.** Srimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit has been elected president of the General Assembly, the first time a woman has been elected. St. Joan's Alliance has sent congratulations to Mrs. Pandit and best wishes to her in her arduous task.

\* \* \*

**International Conferences.** At the Conference of the International Federation of University Women held in London in August, St. Joan's International Alliance was represented by Miss P. C. Challoner, M.A., as fraternal delegate. At the Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World held in Toronto in the same month, Mrs. Norah de Kresz attended as fraternal delegate from the Alliance.

### IN MEMORIAM

**Dame Laurentia McLachlan, O.S.B., Lady Abbess of Stanbrook**

It must have been a surprise to those readers of *The Times* who had never heard of the Abbess of Stanbrook to discover from the tributes to her in the Obituary on the 24th of August that she was a very famous woman, who although she had spent almost all her long life—she died at the great age of 87—as a nun in an enclosed Benedictine convent, had won a world-wide reputation as a liturgical expert and an authority on plain-song. I confess that with all the knowledge of her achievements I had acquired during the friendship with which she honoured me for over forty years I was a little surprised myself at seeing her name in headlines in the press the day after her death. None of the many books she wrote on her special subjects had been published under that name. In conformity with the rule of her house their authorship was attributed to "A Benedictine of Stanbrook."

She had many friends who were not members of the Catholic Church, and it may be considered a striking proof of the affection and respect she inspired in them that the most satisfying tribute to her personality and gifts which has so far appeared was written by Sir Sydney Cockerell who had no sympathy at all with the faith that was the mainspring of her life, the faith that had led her as a young girl, much against her will, to adopt the vocation of a nun. All who knew her will have no difficulty in identifying her with the woman described by Sir Sydney as "at once so learned, so saintly and so brimful of kindness and compassion. Another blessing was hers, that of a very keen sense of humour." It was this blessing which made conversations with her through the double grille in the parlour so easy for the visitor. That, and the interest she took in the world outside the convent. Her knowledge of world affairs often amazed me. She would discuss them with the same freedom from prejudice always manifest in her discussion of theological questions, indeed of any questions. My first meeting with her took place soon after I had joined the newly-formed Catholic Suffrage Society. I quickly discovered that her attitude towards the struggle to secure votes for women was most sympathetic, and as time went on I had many proofs she was a champion of the feminist cause. She believed in the potentialities of her sex, and was herself a shining example of their greatness and diversity. As a musician, as a writer, as a scholar, and, after she was elected Abbess in 1931, as the ruler of a community, she was in the first rank. I am not equal to any estimate of her spiritual eminence. She seemed to me a saint, one who had much in common with St. Teresa of Avila. She had the same humorous impatience with an excess of piety, the same good sense in

her instructions to her nuns. I hope that her conferences, a few of which she lent me to read, will one day be published. Her lessons in true religion are not for nuns only, but for all who have the humility to acknowledge a need of them.

Before I bring this inadequate tribute, in which I can count omissions by the hundred, to an end, I must mention to what a pitch of perfection she trained the Stanbrook choir. She has described the methods she adopted so well in *Cantat Amor*, a pamphlet which can be obtained from the Stanbrook Abbey press, that it should not be impossible for any teacher of the singing of Gregorian chant to benefit by them. After giving much valuable technical advice, this most musical of musicians emphasises the necessity for the singers to pray their song. "The mind must be set on the object of it—on God. This is the *sine qua non* of a good and reverent rendering of the chant." In her younger days, the Abbess, who then filled in succession the offices of Sub-Prioress and Prioress, had a beautiful voice, but it was always a praying voice. She was mindful of a line roughly written in a 15th century hand at the end of a Gradual, which once belonged to the Benedictine community of Worcester Cathedral, and is now preserved in the Cathedral Library.

"Non clamor sed amor sonat in aure Dei."

**Christopher St. John**

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

*Leonora De Alberti in "The Catholic Citizen", 15th October, 1928.*

We have had many proofs that one result of the work of the C.W.S.S. was to break down many prejudices and much misapprehension existing among our fellow countrymen regarding Catholics. Indeed, this was publicly acknowledged by a clergyman of the Free Churches at one of the Joint meetings.

The very existence of the Society caused reverberations in various parts of the globe. For instance, an Italian paper, reproving certain priests for condemning suffrage—which they could do as individuals—pointed to the existence of a Catholic Suffrage Society in London—which had not been condemned—as a proof that woman suffrage could not be contrary to Catholic teaching.—*History of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society.*

### CHRISTMAS SALE

Have you started to buy your Christmas presents yet? You will be able to get anything you want from a Christmas Card to a dress at our Christmas Sale on Saturday, November 28th in St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. But first of all you must send us goods of all kinds to sell. New things, please, with prices clearly marked. Or money towards the expenses.

Also we shall need plenty of volunteers to sell and to be waitresses at the lunch and teas provided. If you can help in any way please send your name, and the time of day you are willing to come, to St. Joan's Office, 55 Berners St., W.1. **Noreen K. Carr, Hon. Treasurer**



### MEETING OF MERSEYSIDE BRANCH

The Merseyside Branch of St. Joan's Alliance recently, by kind permission of Mrs. Brady, held a meeting in the garden of her house "The Paddock" and were afterwards entertained to tea. Miss Margery Mercer who teaches in the boys' ward at Wrightington Hospital School addressed the meeting.

Miss Mercer warned her listeners to put from their minds the idea that a Hospital School was a place of misery. On the contrary it was the cheeriest place imaginable and visitors who came expecting to have their hearts wrung, left in the happiest of spirits. To prove her point Miss Mercer told how when a "Help Your Neighbour" campaign was being run in the neighbourhood, one of the children exclaimed, "We can't do any thing for that, can we Miss?" To which the response from another child was: "Yes, we can. We can cheer up the miserable visitors."

Miss Mercer emphasised that the greatest injustice that can be done to an invalid child consists in not treating him as a perfectly normal child, once he has had the treatment and care that his disease required. Their "problem children" she declared, were all the result of parents not recognising this, and so spoiling the children and making them unfit for life with others.

She gave details of the subjects taught, the methods employed and the time devoted to school work which was less than in a normal school because things like P.T., games, dancing were impossible.

The children were all suffering from some form of non-infectious tuberculosis, and their ages ranged from two years to sixteen years. Many wore plaster casts and one boy whose back was affected, lay rigidly on his back fixed in a plaster bed and in that position did his School Certificate Examination, passing with credits! The children are taught individually when they cannot be grouped and their lessons are continued from where they left off in their normal schools. To ensure no break and no falling back, there is frequent correspondence between the staff of Wrightington and the staffs of the schools from which the children came and to which they are to return. The aim is to ensure that the children fit back into their place in the former schools without a hitch.

Most of the teaching is done in the open air or under a verandah; and Miss Mercer described taking eight or nine of her pupils "for a walk" round the grounds by means of a basket carriage on wheels, large enough to accommodate them all and pushed by Miss Mercer. During these "walks" the children become acquainted with Nature at first hand. Miss Mercer told of the wonderment of one small boy when she showed him peas growing, and opened a pod that he might see for himself where the "peas on his plate" came from.

In answer to a question Miss Mercer explained that the hospital authorities tried to have on the staff a member of each of the chief denominations. The religious instruction given in general was undenominational, but arrangements were made for the various religious groups to give their own special instructions outside school hours, and the priests of the nearby parish were most devoted to the Hospital children.

Two of the White Sisters from Liverpool were among a most appreciative audience.

Frances A. Keeley

**C**ATHOLIC Overseas Club Anniversary Dance,  
Kensington Town Hall, October 29th, 8 p.m.

Tickets 4s. from the secretary:

Catholic Overseas Club, 62, Victoria St., S.W.1.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

NON-PARTY

Office—55, Berners Street, Oxford Street, London, W.1

Patron: Saint Joan of Arc. Colours: Blue, White and Gold

Organ—"The Catholic Citizen," 4d. monthly.

### OBJECT

To band together Catholics of both sexes, in order to secure the political, social and economic equality between men and women, and to further the work and usefulness of Catholic women as citizens.

### MEMBERSHIP

All Catholic women are eligible as Members, who approve the object and methods, and will pay a minimum annual subscription of 10s. which includes *The Catholic Citizen*. Men are invited to join as Associates, on the same conditions, with the exception that they may not elect or be elected to the Executive.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOKSHOP

**FOYLES**  
FOR BOOKS

ALL CATHOLIC BOOKS

All new Books available on day of publication. Secondhand and rare Books on every subject.

Subscriptions taken for British, American and continental magazines and we have a first class Postal Library.

We BUY Books, Stamps and Coins.

119-125 CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.2  
Gerrard 5660 (16 lines) \* Open 9-6 (inc. Sat.)

Nearest Station: Tottenham Court Road

Catholic Funeral Upholders

**JOHN HUSSEY Ltd.**

2 Berkeley Gardens

(Adjoining 104) Kensington Church St., W.8

Valuers for Probate

**A SUITABLE MORTUARY CHAPEL**

can be placed at the disposal of families

Tel. BAYswater 3046.

Telegrams: Requiem, Kens., London.

Willmer Brothers & Co., Ltd., Chester Street, Birkenhead.