

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

WOMEN'S SERVICE

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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 Law of Domicile as it Affects Married Women

*A Memorandum compiled by Mrs. Florence Earengy, J.P., setting out the views of the Status of Women Committee*

Domicile is difficult to define. Broadly speaking it is the country of a person's home or where he intends permanently to live.\*

Florence Earengy writes in "*A Milk White Lamb*":—

"Domicile may be that of Origin or of Choice. A woman on marriage, according to English law, whatever her intention, loses her pre-marriage domicile and acquires that of her husband and is subject to his domicile, however often it may be changed by him during the continuance of the marriage. This results from the Common Law doctrine that husband and wife are one person, and the husband is that one. She cannot divest herself of his domicile and acquire one of her own choice. She may be separated by agreement, or her husband may have deserted her; she may be entitled to a judicial separation or even a divorce; nevertheless she is tied to her husband's domicile. Nothing short of his death or a decree absolute of divorce or nullity can give her the power to acquire a domicile of choice of her own; and until she exercises that power her domicile remains that of her husband at the time of his death, or of the decree, as the case may be. It is possible therefore for a wife to find herself in the Gilbertian position of being domiciled in a country she has never even visited."

The Common Law rule that a woman on marriage took the domicile of her husband goes back to the time when a husband had practically absolute dominion over his wife and an absolute right to all her personal property. It is now grotesquely out of date.

The injustice of the present law was particularly noticeable in cases which arose during the last war. As a result some relief was legislated for. The Matrimonial Causes Act 1950 allows proceedings by a wife if her husband has deserted her or been deported from the U.K. under the law as an alien, if he was immediately before the desertion or deportation domiciled in England; also in proceedings for divorce or nullity, if the wife is resident in England and has been ordinarily resident there for

three years immediately preceding the commencement of the proceedings, and the husband is not domiciled in any other part of the U.K. or in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. This relief does not go far enough. It does not abolish the old rule as to a wife having no separate domicile; she is still tied to the domicile of her husband.

The jurisdiction of the English Courts in cases of dissolution or nullity of marriage rests on domicile. The wife is unable to exercise an intention or choice in the matter. Great difficulty and injustice have been manifest in cases before the courts where English women married to foreigners, whose domicile became theirs automatically on marriage, found themselves without redress because they were unable to avail themselves of the jurisdiction of their country's courts. Such cases illustrate the necessity for a change in the law to remedy the resulting injustice.

To quote again from Florence Earengy's book:

"The rules governing succession on death vary according to the nature of the property. In the case of immovables such as land, the validity of a will and the succession on intestacy are governed by the law of the country in which they are situated. In the case of movables, however, comprising broadly what is regarded in England as personal estate such as shares, etc., in companies, furniture, money and other personal possessions, the validity of a will, and the succession and distribution on an intestacy, are governed by the law of the domicile which the deceased had at the time of his or her death.

"In some cases a wife may not know what her husband's domicile is; domicile is always a difficult matter to determine. How it is possible for her to ensure that her will complies with the requirements of the law of his domicile (which at present is hers), or what part of her estate she can dispose of according to that law, bearing in mind (1) that he may have a right to a part of her estate of which she cannot deprive him by will, and (2) that he may change his domicile subsequently to the date of the will? How then can she calculate what assets she has to dispose of, and to whom and in what proportions she can give them?

\* But it is not to be confused with the Matrimonial home.—Editor.



"A wife whose husband has died domiciled abroad retains his last domicile until she adopts a domicile of choice — again a matter which may cause difficulty in obtaining the necessary evidence. Then, too, difficulties may arise as to domicile of the children of the marriage, even where their mother, after becoming a widow, has acquired a domicile of choice."

The Private International Law Committee disclose in their first report last February serious defects in the law of domicile. Some of these affect men and women, but the most serious affect married women alone. The Committee do not recommend any further breach in the doctrine of the unity of domicile of husband and wife, but would grant a meagre concession to justice towards a married woman which would enable her when separated from her husband by a court order to acquire a domicile different from his. This view is not acceptable to the Status of Women Committee. Since 1948 a married woman can retain her own nationality on marriage and justice demands the same right in respect of domicile. Considering its importance in all its bearings, and the provisions of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, and other enactments, it is an anachronism that a wife should, whether she approves or not, be saddled with the domicile of her husband, who may make one change after another without her knowledge or approval.

The status of woman should be entirely removed from the age when she was a chattel classed with minors, infants and persons of unsound mind.

#### COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY

The members of the Government Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution have been announced by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The full list of the committee members is:—

- Mr. J. F. Wolfenden (chairman).
- Mr. James Adair, formerly Procurator Fiscal in Glasgow.
- Mrs. Mary Cohen, chairman of the Scottish Association of Girls' Clubs.
- Mr. Desmond Curran, senior psychiatrist at St. George's Hospital, London.
- The Rev. V. A. Demant, Regius Professor of Moral Theology at Oxford.
- Mr. Kenneth Diplock, Q.C., Recorder of Oxford.
- Sir Hugh Linstead, Conservative M.P. for Putney, a barrister and secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society.
- The Marquess of Lothian.
- Mrs. Kathleen Lovibond, for twenty years a magistrate and chairman of the Uxbridge (Middlesex) Juvenile Courts.
- Mr. Victor Mishcon, chairman of the London County Council, a solicitor.
- Mr. Goronwy Rees.
- Lady Stopford, a magistrate and doctor.
- The Rev. R. F. V. Scott, minister of a Glasgow church.
- Mr. W. T. Wells, Socialist M.P. for Walsall, a barrister.
- Dr. Joseph Whitby, a North London G.P., with psychiatric experience.

#### THE OPEN DOOR INTERNATIONAL

The Open Door International celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation at the ninth Conference at Oxford in July. Of the original members only Elizabeth Abbott was present, Gertrude Baer being unfortunately prevented from coming at the last moment.

The Conference was formally opened on July 26th with welcoming speeches from Miss Helen Darbishire, former Principal of Somerville College, whose long life has seen such changes in the position of women at Oxford and outside, and Canon Howard of St. Peter's Hall, who confessed that he had completely changed his outlook on the question in his later life.

In her Presidential address Anna Westergaard reviewed the progress made since 1929 towards securing the economic emancipation of the woman worker. She welcomed, as proof of this progress, the acknowledgment, in the United Nations preliminary Report on the World Social Situation (1952), that so-called "protective legislation" had tended to keep women out of the factories where conditions are relatively good and to leave them to unregulated and often entirely unskilled work. She asked for the abolition of special Conventions regarding women's work and said that these must be fought until it is recognised "that they are aimless, that they are history—and no history to be proud of."

There followed greetings from many individuals and representatives of organisations. The latter included Mrs. Elgström, Swedish member of St. Joan's International Alliance, and Miss Challoner, Chairman of the British Section of the Alliance. Miss Challoner reminded the Conference that the back files of *The Catholic Citizen* bore witness to the continual support given by the Alliance to Open Door principles. These principles were reaffirmed in the Resolutions passed by the Conference and it was clear that the Open Door International does not wish to force women, married or not, into the labour market, but to ensure to them, as adults, freedom of choice; that its aim is to abolish legal restrictions which hamper women in their work; to reject criterions of "equal value" which confuse the plain demand for the rate for the job and to reject proposals for part-time work which affect women only.

The Open Door Council considers that protective measures should be applied to *all* workers against the dangers of their work, and that women should be free to decide themselves, with medical advice, on the length of time they should absent themselves from work before and after childbirth.

An Indonesian visitor spoke of the importance of the Conference to her country, and stress was laid on the importance of exporting to such newly-developing countries as look to the West, only principles that are sound and well thought out.

#### Notes and Comments

On September 23rd Mrs. Walter Elliot, U.K. delegate to the Ninth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, kindly met members of the Women's Advisory Council of the United Nations, prior to her departure.

Though new to the special work involved in her appointment to the Assembly, Mrs. Elliot has great experience in political and social matters. It was refreshing to hear her forthright approach to many of the questions which will be discussed.

The Hon. Secretary of St. Joan's Alliance asked for the support of the U.K. delegation for a resolution passed by the Alliance in favour of less frequent meetings of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council, which should lead to a reduction in the amount of documentation, fuller and more carefully prepared discussion, and more fruitful results.

Mrs. Elliot said the Government was very sympathetic to this point of view.

The Alliance also asked for Mrs. Elliot's support for Resolution (547 H (XVIII)) adopted by the Economic and Social Council on July 12th, 1954 (on the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women), concerning "customs, ancient laws and practices affecting the human dignity of women," which are inconsistent with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (For the full text of the resolution, see *The Catholic Citizen*, May, 1954.)

Miss Barry said that St. Joan's Alliance and other women's organisations, notably the Women's Freedom League, had been working for over twenty years for these reforms, and that the time was over-ripe for definite action to be taken to raise the deplorable status under which women in certain parts of the world still suffer.

St. Joan's Alliance begged the U.K. delegation to take the lead in this matter at the General Assembly. This was supported by representatives of several other organisations present.

Mrs. Elliot said she was wholly sympathetic and promised to do her best with her delegation in New York.

Other questions brought up included the problem of refugees, the Convention on Equal Political Rights for Women, and the urgent need for more educational facilities for the women of the under-developed countries.

Mrs. Elliot promised to meet members of the Women's Advisory Council to report to them on her return from New York.

The Women's Freedom League, with whom the Alliance has worked for many years, will have a stall at St. Joan's Fair.

A recent case of award for damages is worth considering in the light of the value of the work of the housewife in the home. There are, of course, other intangibles which cannot be valued.

Mr. Edward Harman, a company director at Coventry has been awarded £3,250 damages for the loss of his wife killed in a road accident. There are nine children and Mr. Harman said the house had never been run the same since his wife's death.

It cost him two and a half times as much to run it compared with when she was alive. It was said on Mr. Harman's behalf that it was a case of a number of persons replacing the services of one. "A wife can be a willing slave but paid servants are inclined to work to rule."

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At the Solemn Reception of His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain, followed by Pontifical High Mass, at Westminster Cathedral on September 21st, St. Joan's Alliance was represented by Miss Noreen Carr and Miss Jameson. We offer His Excellency our respectful congratulations and an assurance of our prayers.

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We ask the prayers of our members for the repose of the soul of Miss Ruth Crosse, a staunch member of the Alliance, who died on September 10th. Miss Crosse never failed to send her subscription to the Alliance on the first day of January each year.

In 1953 she received the Cross "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice," for her many years' work for Our Lady's Catechists. R.I.P.

\* \* \*

We offer our deep sympathy to Mrs. Jackson on the death of her mother, Mrs. McCurdy, and ask our members to pray for her. R.I.P.

\* \* \*

We send our best wishes to Miss Ann Whittles who entered the Convent of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mary Ward's Foundation) on September 11th.

\* \* \*

We congratulate our member, Miss Joan Morris, who has had conferred on her the Master of Arts degree in Liturgical Research at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

\* \* \*

**Merseyside Branch.** A party was held at Birkenhead on August 26th by kind permission of the Misses Barry, when members had the pleasure of hearing from Miss Florence Barry an account of some of the work of the Alliance done at headquarters. It was good to meet old friends and new members.



## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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### Girls at School

This account\* of the education of girls in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Emeritus Professor of Education in the University of Reading is, as Professor Beales remarks in his foreword, a pioneer work in that it describes the little-known contribution to education of the teaching Orders of nuns before the French Revolution. Of conventual activities Professor Barnard says, they "form a topic upon which people are inclined to form judgments with a minimum of information," and, of the teaching Orders, "in view of the extent and significance of their work . . . it is curious that they should have received so little attention from educational historians."

The French Revolution made such great play with its schemes of education, that it may come as a surprise to learn that there was a widespread system of education, for girls no less than for boys, under the aegis of the Catholic Church, long before 1789. There were the "little schools" and the charity schools for the poor, and the schools of the Religious Orders for the bourgeoisie. The girls of the nobility (less fortunate in that respect) were given home-education at the hands of "gouvernantes." These last, with some noble and notable exceptions, had little in common with the cultured poor gentlewomen to whom, later, English girls owed so much; they were, as Madame de Maintenon, herself the former "gouvernante" to Louis XIV's children by Madame de Montespan, told the pupils at St. Cyr, for the most part "peasants, or at best petites bourgeoises, who knew nothing beyond making you stand straight . . . and curtsy well."

The most delightful and instructive of the three lectures which make up this book, is that devoted to the educational work of the Teaching Orders of nuns. Professor Barnard reckons that between thirty and forty of these new foundations were working in France during the seventeenth century, while the older Orders, such as the Benedictines,

\* *Girls at School under the Ancien Régime.* By H. C. Barnard, M.A. (Oxon.), D.Lit. (Lond.). (Burns Oates, 5s.)

the Trinitarians, the Dominicans, and Third Order Franciscans, continued to carry on educational work as they had before the great upheaval of the Reformation. The first of the new Orders "which became the largest and perhaps the best known," was that founded by St. Angela of Merici in Italy in 1535—the Order of St. Ursula—and Professor Barnard gives a detailed account of its schools. Of the Ursulines, according to the mind of St. Angela—women living in their own homes and instructing girls and young women in ordinary schools—he says, "the idea of such a free organisation was too far in advance of contemporary opinion," and, as we know, the Ursulines were soon enclosed.

The famous foundation made by Madame de Maintenon herself was not originally intended to be a Convent School but it was finally put into the hands of the Dames of Saint-Louis. The ideal pupil of this school founded by this teacher of genius was "la fille raisonnable," who did everything, praying, eating, playing, and working "de tout son coeur." Pupils from this school helped to spread this spirit in the other Convent Schools where many of them taught.

The Convent Schools seem to have deteriorated in the eighteenth century before the holocaust of the French Revolution, and it is perhaps worth noting the reasons for this—for they are valid for all institutions at all times. When the tradition laid down by a genius becomes a groove and stifles originality, and when education ceases to be the education of a person for life and becomes the preparation of an individual for a preconceived position or function in life, it is time for a fresh evaluation. The conditions of growth is a cutting out of dead wood and the opening of the branches to the sun and fresh air.

It is therefore significant that after the French Revolution, a new group of Religious Teaching Foundations sprang up in France.

Professor Barnard does not lay claim to more than a "merely academic interest in the subject

### HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY

By Leonora de Alberti

(continued)

"THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST"

But our supreme act of faith was the foundation of our paper "The Catholic Suffragist." Like the Society the paper was born of a chance conversation, this time between Beatrice Gadsby and Leonora de Alberti, while engaged in the homely task of scrubbing the office floor. Miss Gadsby said the society needed an organ of its own; Miss de Alberti questioned the possibility of raising the necessary funds. Miss Gadsby said the money would be forthcoming, it was the Editor who was lacking; she further suggested that Miss de Alberti was cut out for the purpose. The latter, though surprised, swallowed the bait with an alacrity possibly born of ignorance, for she had no journalist experience.

Miss de Alberti, backed by Mrs. Meynell, was anxious to call the paper "The Newer Eve," with the quotation from Francis Thompson, which is well known to our readers, since it is to be seen on every copy of the paper. The Committee saw danger in the title, and decided that while retaining the quotation the paper should be called "The Catholic Suffragist," and by that name it was known, until it became "The Catholic Citizen," after the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

The production of the paper, which was timed for October, 1914, was deferred owing to the European War, but to the astonishment of many the first number appeared on January 15th, 1915. Our first Leader was by Alice Meynell, who introducing it to the public says: "The production in war time of a new paper dedicated to the cause of Votes for Women, should remind us that though thousands are suffering acutely, splendidly and conspicuously, millions are suffering chronically, inconspicuously, and with little hope, evils against which the whole Suffrage movement has set its face. Crime has been lessened by the War we hear; but we cannot hope that sin has been lessened. And the difficult and arduous work of the women reformers is essentially and fundamentally a moral work. A Catholic suffragist woman is a suffragist on graver grounds and with weightier reasons than any other suffragist in England." . . . And in concluding her article she says: "Great work, great devotion, great power, great ability are spent by those reforming women who have temporary evils to correct and temporal good to try for. Is it not then a wonder that all Christian women and therefore all Catholic women are not in the forefront of such a movement? For their aim, their pain, their compassion, their hope, are for things material and temporal, but also for things spiritual and eternal."

(To be continued)

**Australia.** Congratulations to Mrs. Jean Daly, President of St. Joan's Alliance, New South Wales, on her appointment as Australian delegate to the Ninth Session of the Status of Women Commission. Mrs. Daly has also been elected President of the Australia Association of the United Nations, New South Wales Section.

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**Germany.** We congratulate Mrs. Gertrud Meyer on her recent election to the Welfare Committee of the Karlsruhe Town Council, and wish her all success in her work.

of education," and it is therefore particularly good to have a tribute to the Catholic Teaching Orders from a scholar who goes solely by what his original sources give him. This valuable summary of research should send readers to the distinguished author's standard books on the subject of French education in the 17th and 18th centuries: *The French Tradition in Education; The Little Schools of Port Royal; The Port Royalists on Education; and Mme. de Maintenon and Saint Cyr.*

P. C. Challoner

## DOMREMY

By Margaret Burns, of Melbourne

This brief note is but a "thank you" for an unexpected privilege I had recently: that of visiting Domrémy.

The coach with its complement of 36 tourists had by-passed great Cathedrals, and yet here we were digressing to call at that humble hamlet of St. Joan. It was inexplicable—but how I hugged the joy to myself!

Many of you readers will have spent a longer time there and know the place better. Then you will appreciate the feelings of a first comer. Set in its valley secluded and peaceful stood the small Church which still houses the font at which our Saint was baptised, and even some relics of the original walls. Eyes darted fast from one to another of the windows depicting scenes in St. Joan's life. Time was fleeting in that holy atmosphere and there was scant to spare for her home next door. It was time packed with deep feeling.

We found it hard to leave and were subdued on our return to the coach, talking quietly of the "wonderful atmosphere" of that little lovely Church that breathes devotion to the holy and heroic figure it enshrines.

## ST. JOAN'S FAIR

All members will be very pleased to know that Mr. Gilbert Harding has kindly consented to open the Christmas Fair on Saturday the 20th of November in the Westminster Cathedral Hall. The opening ceremony will take place at 2.30 p.m. and we feel sure that there will be a full hall and that our famous Opener will be given a real St. Joan's welcome.

Gifts for the many stalls are needed and also prizes for the competitions. It is hoped that every member will send one or more contribution. These may be sent to Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E., 14A Ashley Gardens, London, S.W.1, marked "St. Joan's Fair." Members who are unable to be present on the day are invited to send gifts (priced) for the stalls or a donation in money. Money gifts should be sent to the Office.

The Christmas Fair is being organised on a large scale this year in order that the great work of St. Joan's Alliance may be developed and not handicapped by lack of funds.

The Fair is going to be an interesting and enjoyable occasion but it needs the help of all members, not only in sending gifts, but in coming themselves and making the Fair known among their friends. Only so can the function be the success we hope and pray it will be.



## REVIEWS

**Directoire Des Pretres Charges De Religieuses (Edition du Cerf Imprimerie 1954).**

Bien qu'il soit rigoureusement spécialisé cet ouvrage ne peut nous laisser indifférentes. Pour l'ensemble il ne nous appartient d'exprimer aucun autre sentiment que celui d'une respectueuse estime. Nous insisterons plus longuement sur deux chapitres spécialement accessibles aux laïcs.

**(Chapitre II, Page 29). Les Grandes Lignes Du Développement Historique De L'Etat Religieux Féminin.**

Sous ce titre et en quelques pages un exposé lucide incroyablement évocateur nous fait connaître et parfois profondément ressentir l'état spirituel et social des femmes saintement vouées au célibat d'abord au temps de la primitive Eglise où une pureté de mœurs et de doctrine assez générale permettait à la Virginité de s'épanouir librement et de répandre ses richesses sans autre cadre que celui de la famille ou d'une société encore Evangélique; puis l'inexorable fluctuation des faits et des courants d'idées; les guerres et les révolutions; la clôture et la règle; les diverses familles religieuses modifiées, réformées, restreintes ou multipliées selon d'imprévisibles lois.

Une espérance inattendue surprend l'esprit à la lecture de ce résumé si bref où chaque alinéa reconstruit une période historique.

Le passé analysé avec une sérénité où le mot juste prend toute sa valeur éclaire les perspectives et les promesses d'un avenir peut-être prochain.

**Chapitre VI, Page 117), Psychologie Des Religieuses.**

Ecrit dans un esprit tout différent, ce chapitre est une "leçon" professée par une Religieuse à l'usage d'ecclésiastiques directeurs de consciences. C'est dire quelle en est l'importance. L'auteur ne se borne pas à rapporter certains traits psychologiques observés par elle chez les religieuses d'aujourd'hui. La psychologie féminine est mise en cause. On s'y réfère sans réserve dans un sens absolu comme à une science exacte immuablement fixée. Le lecteur inattentif fait bénéficier cette science générale de l'autorité qu'on ne peut refuser à une Religieuse expérimentée parlant de détails dont elle a été témoin et c'est ici qu'il nous est permis d'élever la voix.

Le problème qu'on appelle: "Psychologie Féminine" demanderait une étude spéciale. Contentons-nous d'affirmer l'évidence: La condition des femmes évolue rapidement. Ce qu'on appelle leur "Psychologie" évolue de même et le jour n'est pas loin où une vérité trop longtemps méconnue apparaîtra clairement, à savoir

que si il existe une véritable "Psychologie féminine" elle est encore à découvrir et que c'est une erreur pernicieuse que de la reconnaître obstinément dans l'ensemble de certains traits imposés de l'extérieur à une catégorie humaine privée de ses droits et mise hors d'état de donner sa mesure.

La psychologie de la femme est celle de tous les opprimés. Grâce à Dieu il semble qu'une antique et lente évolution s'accélère et que le jour approche où se réalisera la parole du poète et prophète: "Surgite postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem doloris."

Et les monastères, qui en fin de compte se recrutent dans le monde, verront sans doute se modifier leurs interprétations psychologiques.

Il existe déjà dans le monde une majorité de femmes, célibataires ou non, qui ne sont plus spécialement "imaginatives" et qui voient assez nettement les choses comme elles sont. Il en existe aussi que le soin des questions pratiques ne réduit pas à "état diminué" "ratiné" (sic) "inachevé" où la femme "s'épluche" transformant "des taupinières en montagnes." D'autres (certaines Doctresses en médecine particulièrement) peuvent se montrer généreuses sans qu'on doive attribuer leur désintéressement à je ne sais quelle fureur "oblatrice" à laquelle la femme serait en proie.

Dieu veuille que les Directeurs de conscience trop persuadés des irrémédiables déficiences inhérentes à la nature féminine ne fassent pas échec à une invasion d'équilibre et de bon sens qui désire conserver toutes les richesses d'une chrétienne spiritualité.

M. Lenoël

**Women and the World Today.** By Peggy Chambers. (Forbes Robertson, 10s. 6d.)

This collection of twenty-one biographies gives a good cross section in vastly different fields of the position women have wrung for themselves in the world today. We read of Marya Sklodovska Curie working between the cooking stove and her tumbledown laboratory, to feed her family and to discover radium to bring healing to the sick. Laura Johnson Knight is another example of genius hampered by bitter poverty. Aged fourteen she put up her hair and went out to give painting lessons to earn something for her dying mother. It is cheering that success came to her while still young. Vera Brittain and Vera Laughton Mathews did not have the same material handicaps as Madame Curie and Dame Laura, but they too had their struggles before winning the status they now enjoy. This book should be read by women of today, so many of whom accept the rights that have been so hardly won for them as a matter of course. E.F.G.

**The Springs of Silence.** By Madeline De Frees (Sister Mary Gilbert, S.N.J.M.). (World's Work, 12s. 6d.)

This is an account of the life of a nun based on the author's seventeen years' experience in a teaching order—the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, which has houses throughout the U.S.A. and Canada. It is not strictly speaking an autobiography, but "the essence of a way of life" as seen through the eyes of a writer who wishes to share her knowledge with readers who know nuns, and with those who know little of nuns. The bright journalistic style in which she describes her preparation for and entry into the noviciate, and various experiences as a professed nun will not appeal to all readers, though they may be interested in the picture drawn in these personal reminiscences, of the American way of life as lived by middle-class Catholics in the Western States and fascinated by the account of a nun following a University Course in Journalism.

But all who are already familiar with nuns should appreciate the chapters in which she writes sincerely and naturally of the basic things — the foundation of a personal spiritual life in Religion, how it is fostered by the life in the Noviciate and by the Rules of a Congregation. Her detailed descriptions of the working out in practice of the vows of obedience and poverty, which stress the inner freedom they give to those observing them, are specially good in helping the reader to a deeper understanding of the Religious Life. M.J.

**A Woman in the Polar Night.** By Christiane Ritter. (Translated from the German by Jane Degras.) (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.)

After taking part in a scientific expedition, Mrs. Ritter's husband remained in Spitzbergen. She joined him there and stayed for one year. Her first impressions of the Arctic were not happy. The cold and desolate land and the comfortless isolated hut which they were to share with another hunter, the seeming inadequacy of the stores of food which were to sustain them, at first appalled her. She arrived during the short summer and was thus able to make several journeys through the land before the long night, lasting from October to February, closed in and she gradually became aware of the unusual and arresting beauty of her surroundings, the pure air and the opalescent colouring of the landscape.

This book is a record of her courageous and successful effort to adjust herself to a primitive way of life in all seasons and conditions. Often left alone in the hut with blizzards raging all around and in the immense solitude she discovered different values and watching the pattern of nature she felt the harmony of the universe.

Mrs. Ritter has an exciting story to tell which leaves one full of admiration for her fortitude and endurance. M.O.C.

**An Experiment in Co-operation, 1925-1954.**

The Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations has just issued this booklet, bringing a former publication up-to-date.

The primary object of the Joint Standing Committee of Women's International Organisations, which was founded in 1925, was to press for the appointment of suitably qualified women to Committees, etc., under the League of Nations, but co-operation in this object led naturally to co-operation on many other questions, and the booklet gives an admirable summary of the work done during nearly thirty years.

The Committee, as a unity, has Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, as have many of the constituent bodies. The Committee lists those subjects on which "a general identity of view" is held among its members. These include the need for a comprehensive International Bill of Human Rights; the promotion of women's rights in political, civil, social and educational fields; the suppression of the traffic in persons; the right of married women to their independent nationality; equal pay for equal work; and the recognition of women's right to earn upon equal terms with men.

St. Joans' Alliance has been a member of the Committee since 1933 and is glad to mark appreciation of the generous help received from other member organisations in the campaign for the abolition of the practice of female circumcision.

The Committee has always paid particular attention to the subject of slavery and supports the demand for the abolition of those ancient customs which still treat women as chattels.

Where expert International Organisations are willing to pool their knowledge and act as one, there is a great deal of saving in labour and energy, and an increased influence in world affairs.

This booklet shows the value of the measure of co-operation that has been attained, and the achievements of the Committee in keeping the status of women to the fore on the international scene.

At the cost of 6d., post free, it can be obtained from the Hon. Mrs. Home Peel, the Hon. Secretary of the Liaison Committee, to whom an inestimable debt of gratitude is owed. P.C.C.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTE

**Japan.** In July, *The Catholic Citizen* printed a note about a textile strike by thirteen thousand women workers in Japan. The women's lives were completely regulated by the company for which they worked, the Omi silk mills. Private letters were opened, girls were forbidden to marry, and were separated from their husbands if they did, and daily attendance at Buddhist services was enforced.

Now it is reported that the president of the company, Mr. Natsukawa has agreed to stop inter-



fering in the lives of his workpeople, to improve wages and conditions, and to recognise a trades union.

British textile workers can congratulate themselves a little on the result. The Lancashire textile workers contributed a thousand pounds to the strike fund, and the secretary of the United Textile Workers on the Labour Party delegation to Russia and China, saw the factory on a brief tour of Japan.

Unfortunately these conditions are still widespread in Japan, where a tradition of the worst sort of paternalism has not yet been broken. It is reliably reported that children from peasant homes are sold even now to factory employers, a form of indentured service not far removed from slavery.

S.C.

## St. Joan's Christmas Fair Westminster Cathedral Hall Saturday, November, 20th, 1954

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*The International Alliance of Women in Co-operation  
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of the Nile) will lecture on

*THE STATUS OF WOMEN UNDER THE NEW  
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