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XLIX

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

Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly

By FRANCES MCGILLICUDDY

"Our last cry is that all praise is due to God, who has created, nourishes, sustains and leads, stage by stage towards perfection, all the worlds." Assembly President Muhammad Zafrulla Khan of Pakistan spoke in Arabic the above words from the Koran as he closed the Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly—one day ahead of schedule. The better than punctual close, termed a "miracle" by one delegate, was credited to the efficiency and tact of the president. The "unique feat" was most remarkable in view of the Assembly's heavy ninety-five item agenda. During the session United Nations membership reached the 110 figure with the admission of Algeria, Burundi, Jamaica, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda.

On November 30th the Assembly unanimously appointed U Thant (Burma) Secretary-General for a term to end November 3rd, 1966. Two of the Assembly's committees had women officers: Madame Marie Sivomey (Togo), Rapporteur of the Third Committee, and Miss Gay Sellers (Canada), Rapporteur of the Second Committee. As always the Third Committee boasted the largest number of women delegates, many of whom represent the newer African countries: Guinea, Libya, Mali, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tanganyika, and Togo. Another African country, Sierra Leone has, with Peru, been elected to membership on the Status of Women Commission.

Each year an attempt is made to characterize in a phrase the underlying mood, spirit or motif of the session. The most tense and dramatic moments during this three month period were those of the historic "confrontation" in the Security Council during the Cuban crisis; however the phrase which is being used to describe the Seventeenth Session as a whole is "the three Ds—Disarmament, Decolonization, and Development." If Disarmament was in fact a motif of the session it was so perhaps in terms of general anxiety over the problem rather than, in terms of any giant step towards its solution . . . and yet, (1) the United States and the U.S.S.R. announced their joint agreement on a programme for the peaceful uses of outer space;

(2) the Assembly called on the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to seek the conclusion of a treaty which would prohibit for all time all nuclear weapons tests; (3) the United States and the U.S.S.R. jointly introduced a declaration on the Conversion to Peaceful Needs of the Resources Released by Disarmament.

The mood of Decolonization was all pervasive, overshadowing at times the substance of the item under debate (See Marriage Convention below).

The third "D"—Development was a topic not confined to the Second (Economic) Committee. The Assembly recommended, inter alia, that ECOSOC convene, not later than early 1964, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Referring to speeches and resolutions pertaining to Development, President Muhammad Zafrulla Khan commented:

"The so-called developing countries . . . are no longer willing to be content with the present position or to be put off with alleviations of it as a matter of charity or even of benevolence."

Slavery

Following debate of the item: *Implementation of the Supplementary Convention of 1956 on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*, the Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling on Member States or members of Specialized Agencies which have not yet become parties to these conventions to do so. Fifty-two U.N. Member States or members of Specialized Agencies are not yet parties to the 1926 Convention, and seventy-eight are not parties to the Supplementary Convention of 1956. During the debate Sir Douglas Glover (U.K.) commented that though some progress was being made and the classic forms of slavery seemed about to disappear, analogous practices were still growing. He cited the case of peonage in the High Andes, widespread debt bondage in Asia, and the situation in many countries where children and girls were still being sold by poverty-stricken families, in some cases into the brothel. Sir Douglas also mentioned forced labour which exists in many areas of the world as an evil which should be included in a debate on slavery and analogous matters.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Devotees of the Third Committee and of ECOSOC and its Commissions who take for granted the inclusion in resolutions of collaboration with non-governmental organizations, were a bit startled during a Second Committee debate to hear certain delegates call for the deletion of the words "non-governmental organizations" from a draft appeal for technical and other kinds of assistance in African Educational Development. Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar and Senegal championed the N.G.O.'s. Mr. Nylander (Ghana) said that Ghana would never forget the contribution which the early missionaries had made to his country. Mr. Doe (Liberia) stated that non-governmental organizations had been at work in Africa long before there had been any programme of technical assistance . . . and that they had "prepared the way for the personnel now operating in Africa."

The Marriage Convention

It will be recalled that the Preamble and the three substantive Articles (1, 2 and 3) of the draft *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages* were adopted by the Third Committee a year ago. The three Articles provide that "no marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties," that "States . . . shall take legislative action to specify a minimum age for marriage," and that "all marriages shall be registered in an appropriate official register." It remained for the Seventeenth Session to consider and adopt the final clauses. The Third Committee completed work on the remaining Articles and presented two resolutions to the Assembly. In introducing the Committee's report the rapporteur, Madame Sivomey (Togo) called attention to the date, December 10th, which the Committee had selected for the opening of the Convention for signatures and ratification.

"If this resolution is adopted, Human Rights Day will see the opening of a convention whose importance is so great not only for millions of women throughout the world . . . but also for the men of the younger generation who are also desirous of expressing freely their decision at the time of founding a family." The Assembly approved the Convention—Resolution A/Res/1763 (XVII)—by a vote of 92 in favour, none against, with 7 abstentions. The Annex to the resolution contains the complete text of the Convention. Resolution B requests ECOSOC to ask the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the draft *Recommendation* in the light of the discussion in the General Assembly on the draft Convention.

Thus the Marriage Convention was adopted by an overwhelming majority vote, but the price of its general approval was a diminution of its vigour. The United States representative held that the substitution of the word *all* for *any one of*, in Article 8 made a mockery of that Article. Article 8 provides that a dispute between any

two or more Contracting States concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention which is not settled by negotiation, shall, "at the request of *all* parties be referred to the International Court of Justice for decision, unless the parties agree to another mode of settlement." It is conceivable that the absence of a reservations clause could make a mockery of the Convention itself. At the present moment nobody, including the legal experts, seems certain of just what the absence of a reservations clause implies. Some hold that any State may reserve on any Article; others, citing the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice relating to the Genocide Convention, maintain that reservations must be compatible with the object and purpose of the Convention; still others consider the Court's opinion not binding since it was merely an advisory opinion and concerned the Genocide Convention only.

Long debate in the "decolonization" key was occasioned by the United Kingdom's plea for the inclusion in the Covenant of a territorial applications Article. Mr Joseph Godber, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, explained his country's position:

" . . . in the absence of a territorial applications Article, there would be two possibilities, at any rate in theory: either the United Kingdom could sign and impose the Convention on its dependent territories which I have just said we cannot in fact do, or the United Kingdom could not sign until every last territory had signified its consent, and in the meantime the inhabitants of both the United Kingdom itself and all the territories for whose international relations we are responsible would be deprived of the benefits of the Convention. . . ."

A final round of speeches preceded the rejection of a territorial clause. "Which is more important," asked the delegate of Ghana . . . "the grant of fundamental freedoms to the colonial people, or teaching them how to marry? I am quite sure that my mother did not need this lesson . . ."

Eight Member States have already signed the Convention.

MOLLY BALVAIRD HEWETT

Congratulations to Miss Molly Balvaird Hewett who was awarded the M.B.E. in the New Year Honours list. From *The Universe* we take the following tribute, which we wholeheartedly endorse: "The M.B.E. goes to Miss Molly Hewett, who officially is secretary of the actors' Interval Club in Dean Street, Soho, which her mother founded nearly forty years ago. Unofficially Miss Hewett is many other things to the club—matron, cashier, housekeeper, hall portress and even dish washer. Her average day lasts sixteen hours. Her salary is nil. An actor who knows the club well has described Miss Hewett as 'a mother-superior ruling a community of strolling players with maternal severity and love.'

Notes and Comments

In connection with St. Thomas' views on women quoted in our middle page article we should like readers to note two paragraphs from an article by Leonora de Alberti in *The Catholic Citizen* of October, 1930.

When Pope Leo XIII issued his Encyclical on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, he made it clear that when he spoke of the wisdom of St. Thomas he used the word advisedly:

"We exhort all of you . . . to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas . . . We say the wisdom of St. Thomas; for it is not by any means in our mind to set before this age, as a standard, those things which may have been inquired into by Scholastic Doctors with too great subtlety or anything taught by them with too little consideration, not agreeing with the investigations of a later age; or, lastly, anything that is not probable." (August 4th, 1879).

* * *

The Twentieth Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance will be held in Freiburg, Germany, by kind invitation of the German Section. The date of the Meeting is September 5th-8th 1963, and we hope that members of the Alliance, all of whom are eligible to attend, will make a note of it now and arrange their holidays accordingly.

Freiburg has an airport, so the journey can be easily made. The President of the German Section, Dr. Bardenhewer, modestly describes Freiburg as "not too big and not too dull." Those who have visited Freiburg know that it is a gem set amidst the beautiful scenery of the mountains of the Black Forest; those who have not yet travelled to this most romantic part of Germany have a treat in store for them.

* * *

This year, as always, we received many Christmas cards and messages from near and far. We thank all members who sent them most warmly, and take this opportunity of sending them our very best wishes for the New Year.

* * *

The under-employment of married women doctors has long been under consideration; it is a sorry tale of wastage on the one hand and frustration on the other. Of the total of 17,000 women doctors in Britain, it has been estimated that over half that number are not working to capacity. It is good to know that the British Medical Association has joined the Medical Women's Federation and other medical bodies in order to investigate the position, and discuss how best to remove the obstacles that at present block the paths of married women doctors who are anxious to obtain either full-time or part-time appointments.

An appointment that will surely gain all-party approval is that of Lady Tweedsmuir who replaces Mr. Galbraith as Under-Secretary for Scotland. The Member for Aberdeen South has had to wait far too long for recognition, sixteen years in fact; the Aberdeen fishing industry and international affairs are her main interests, and while she does not speak very often, when she does, it is very much to the point. As one newspaper cogently remarks, it is surprising that Mr. Macmillan's eye should not have fallen on Lady Tweedsmuir earlier since the talent with which he has, up to now, surrounded himself, can hardly be described as coruscating!

* * *

The necessary two-thirds majority that would allow women to become full members of the Oxford and Cambridge Unions has not yet been reached, but undoubtedly, this is only a matter of time. At Cambridge, for instance Ian Binnie of Pembroke College who is to succeed Brian Pollitt as President of the Cambridge Union had this to say: "I am very disappointed that Brian Pollitt failed to get women admitted as members during his term of office . . . I think women ought to be accepted as members . . . I fully approve of Brian's action in allowing them to speak from the floor during debates." Meanwhile a red-brick university, the University of Durham, has shown far more progressive spirit; twenty-year-old Joanna Barnes of Birmingham has been admitted to the Union Society, the first woman to be admitted in the Society's one hundred and thirty years of history. John Exelby, the President-elect, said that he was delighted. "I know women will be an asset," he declared. It goes without saying that he is right.

* * *

Congratulations to Miss I. F. Hilton of Great Britain who was elected president of the International Federation of University Women at its Congress held in Mexico last August.

FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING

The Fifty-second Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Alliance will be held on Saturday, March 16th, at 2.30 p.m. Nominations for committee and resolutions for the agenda must reach the secretary not later than February 8th. Nominations must be duly proposed and seconded and the consent of the candidate obtained.

Members' subscriptions are now due (£1, which includes "The Catholic Citizen"). It would be of real service to the Alliance if these were sent in promptly. Apart from the time and expense involved in sending repeated individual reminders, the money is required to meet the day-to-day expenses of the office. Please address letters to St. Joan's Alliance, 36a Dryden Chambers, 119 Oxford Street, London W.1.

ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE

BRITISH SECTION OF ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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The Roots of Prejudice

There can be no doubt that the Ecumenical Council is the "Sign of our Time". It is a time for laying bare the roots of old problems and I will endeavour to expose the roots of the contemporary position of women in the Catholic Church.

Let us glance back to the Middle Ages: in the 10th century a brilliant Islamic civilisation flourished in Spain. The Islamic scholars made the philosophy of Aristotle known to the West—a tremendous challenge for the Christian thinkers of that time.

"Greek philosophy" (the alleged summit of human thought) is based on an analysis of the world-picture i.e. a way of interpreting the changing phenomena of the world. There was another "world-picture" before the rise of "philosophy", the mythical world-picture, the remnants of which are still surviving in primitive cultures. Nature is interpreted in terms of the human organism; there are no "things" but living beings endowed with will and understanding. Man is faced with a "thou" wherever he looks.

What was new was the method of abstraction which the Greeks were gradually adopting. There "arose a demand for ever wider generalisation based on the idea that it marks a progress in understanding whenever we can see two or more apparently different things as instances of some one or more general principle." Concepts are only abstracts from things. "This procedure is necessary for finite thought, though it weakens the sense of reality."

But worse than that; the Ionian cosmologies were simply "abstract materialism".

The transition from the mythical towards a philosophical world-picture becomes clear when we analyse the thought of those early scientists. Thales e.g. regarded nature as a single immense organism composed of lesser organisms. Pythagoras is especially interesting for our analysis. "What differentiates him completely from all his predecessors is . . . that he paid more attention to the form or limit of things than to the limitless something of which they were made." The curious

remnant of the mythical world-picture runs like this—"the principle of Limit (form) endowed the first unit with magnitude, a seed in the womb of the Unlimited." This idea exposed Pythagoras to Aristotle's critique that he "did not break with the miracle-mongering of Pherecydes."

Now the sense of reality being weakened, the abstract materialism of the Ionian philosophers being generalised—Socrates made the General Definition the realm of knowledge. This was applied by Plato to the whole realm of existence in his Theory of Forms. In this way substantial reality was attributed to mere abstractions and reality lost in these abstractions. Aristotle collected and systematized them and owing to his reputation as a philosopher they have retained their importance in the concepts of matter and form.

It is easy to understand how alien this "abstract materialism" is intrinsically to the living spirit of Christian Revelation. Many a doctrine of Aristotle was diametrically opposed to the Christian dogma, e.g. the doctrine that God created the world by necessity and from eternity. St. Thomas who "baptised Aristotle" by welding together the two bodies of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian dogma, eliminated the doctrine of eternal creation. "We must hold firmly, as the Catholic faith teaches, that the world has not always existed, and this position cannot be altered."

This is true. But it is equally true that St. Thomas adopted en bloc, the Aristotelian doctrine about women. Unfortunately, this is quite unreal and among other curious assertions it may be mentioned that according to him woman had fewer teeth than man.

But quite apart from the question of teeth, Aristotle—and with him St. Thomas—has plenty of arguments for the uncontestable absolute inferiority of women. The main arguments are the two abstract notions of "matter" and "form".

We have seen that "matter" and "form" were derived from the curious speculations of the early philosophers. "Form" was conceived as the

"active" principle, "matter" as the "passive" principle. According to Greek thought the "active" is superior to the "passive" and the latter must serve the former. The implication is clear, if we apply these notions to the act of generation: man is the "active" (superior), woman the "passive" (inferior). Man is form, woman is matter. From this theory of generation is deduced the theory of the female reality in general; necessarily a negative theory!

Hence it follows "that the father must be loved more than the mother" (St. Thomas, S.th. Par 2, 2 chap. 26) since it is his seed alone which generates new life. The object of every "active principle" being to create in its own likeness it followed that something must have been wrong with this "active principle" if a woman comes into existence at all. Aristotle attributes the failure of man to generate a man to a weakness in his strength, some unfavourable condition in "matter" (woman), or to the moist southern winds. Moisture is in general responsible for any failure of the "active principle".

Woman being passive, imperfect, and coming into existence by some failure of the active and perfect principle, is born to serve the latter. But woman is not even born to serve man in every respect. She is destined "to serve man only in the work of generation, for in any other work any other man would be a better assistant for man than a woman" (St. Thomas, S.th., Pars I, Chap. 92, Art. 1b).

It is not my purpose here to give the whole Aristotelian-Scholastic doctrine about woman. From the few remarks I have made it will be clear that it needs a complete re-interpretation in the terms of modern biology, metaphysics and sociology—let alone the truly Christian sense of reality expressed in the Gospels. As it stands now it is a bad example of discrimination based on sex which is so whole-heartedly condemned by all civilised nations of the world.

Many encyclicals of many Popes, (e.g. *Aeterni Patris* of Pope Leo XIII) have raised the teachings of St. Thomas to the fourth grade of approbation. These teachings have to be the guiding light of all theological work done in the Church. The Church celebrates St. Thomas with this prayer: "O God, thou hast illumined the Church with the admirable wisdom of St. Thomas, your confessor and our teacher . . . may we understand what he taught and imitate what he accomplished."

Every Catholic appreciates the grand achievement of subjecting philosophy to theology but many must fail to understand why any intelligent person should strive to imitate the obvious shortcomings of Greek philosophy.

Erika Unger-Dreiling

N.B. Dr. Dreiling is Dr. Theol. & Dr. Phil. Vienna University.

DRIVING MRS. PANKHURST

From a B.B.C. broadcast by Mrs. Aileen Graham-Jones

by kind permission of "The Listener"

"I believe I was the first woman to take up motoring as a career," said Aileen Graham-Jones in Woman's Hour. Social standards were different in 1911 and there was much raising of eyebrows and disapproval when I announced my intention of going into a motor works to learn how the wheels went round. Driving lessons followed, and in the slow-moving and infrequent traffic driving was far less terrifying than it would be today. I successfully took my R.A.C. certificate; I think I was the first woman to apply for this. After that came the serious question of a job. In those days the "Morning Post" was the recognised medium and I put this startling advertisement: "Lady chauffeur, can do running repairs; what offers?" To my surprise I had three replies, and the one I liked best was from Mrs. Pankhurst's secretary, a request to drive the great leader of the Militant Suffrage Movement on a campaign through England, Wales and Scotland. I went for the interview and was accepted, one pound a week all found, for five months.

We went up through the Lake District to cross the Pennines into Scotland, and the evening before someone mentioned that the snows had melted, and that the Kirkstone Pass was open. I was instructed to take this route instead of the usual one over the Shap. Fifty years ago the Kirkstone Pass was little better than a track and quite unsuited to our heavily built and loaded pant-nicon. However, up we went. It was most imposing and we lunched with that incomparable view around us, though I remember the gloom with which I faced the downward journey. Even in first gear I dared not over-use the brakes for fear of overheating. In those days the brakes acted direct on the wheel drums, and the petrol tank was low on the ground and could be scarred by the track bumps or loose stones and spring a leak. Every mile or so there was a gate across the track dividing the sheep boundaries.

To avoid coming to a complete halt, I prevailed upon my passenger on the front seat to jump down, run on and open the gate, and I would glide gently through. She would then shut the gate and leap on, all this in a long skirt and large hat.

We drove back to London at the end of August in great heat, in that beautiful summer of 1911, with five passengers who, finally, including Mrs. Pankhurst, had to return by train, leaving me to bring a rather worn veteran car safely home. Those months gave me valuable experience for which I have always been grateful.

N.B. It may interest readers to know that a very faithful member of St. Joan's, Francesca Graham, was the passenger on the front seat.

The Month in Parliament

Teacher Training Colleges

Mrs. White asked the Minister of Education about facilities for training as teachers available to married women. Sir Edward Boyle answered that the two day colleges already receiving older students are to provide many more places, and also that the residential colleges will now accept married women as day students; that they will also be allowed to attend the new, temporary day colleges though these will mainly be for school leavers. The Minister also assured Mrs. White that this information will be made public. He said, "I shall do my best to see that information about these arrangements is broadcast as much as possible." (November 29th).

Handicapped People

Mrs. Eirene White introduced a discussion on the problems connected with the education of deaf and partially hearing children. She wondered if everything possible were being done to encourage those who might have a gift for the nerve-racking work of teaching the deaf. She hinted at the possibility of a sabbatical year for teachers presumably to consider whether they might have time to study this branch of teaching. Mrs. White also wanted to know what progress had been made in giving guidance to the parents of deaf school-leavers. (December 3rd).

Nurses' Rules

Miss Herbison led a discussion on the Instrument amending Nurses' Rules in Scotland. She was pleased about the raising of the required standards of educational attainment in that it should raise the status of the profession. She noted with satisfaction that mental nursing would no longer be considered as inferior. Miss Herbison seemed to have some doubts about the opportunities for obtaining the necessary qualification by those who had not attended a school where the Certificate of Education was taken, and by older people and assistant nurses and auxiliaries. Mr. Hannon asked if greater publicity could be given to the facilities for further education. The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Brooman-White), in his reply, stated, "There are many ways in which people who may not have the qualifications . . . can acquire the requisite O level passes. Anyone who has left school can sit for the Scottish Certificate at a further education centre. Anyone who has left school . . . can be sponsored by the education authority and sit for it after private study." The Minister referred also to the special examination to be set by the General Nursing Council. Recalling a reference of Mr. Hannon to a night-school student of 75, he went

on, "That may be a little aged for nursing, but there are certainly people of quite advanced age who, if they wish to achieve the requisite qualifications, will have these various methods open to them." To a question whether any instruction had been issued to Scottish hospitals to stop recruitment of nurses because of an expenditure cut, he replied, "The answer is, No."

Go Slow On Equal Pay

Mr. Wise asked if the Government of Hong Kong had yet adopted the recommendation of the Hong Kong Salaries Commission to the effect that men and women medical officers should receive equal pay. Mr. Sandys' answer illustrates the grudgingness with which the accepted principle of equal treatment of the sexes is so often implemented. He replied, "The Commission's recommendation in this respect was accepted to the extent that equal pay was granted to women medical officers, serving on the pensionable establishment or on agreement, upon reaching the fourth point in their salary scale, or upon entry at or above that level." (December 11th).

V.S.O.

Sir John Maitland obtained the approval of the House to a motion urging the Government to give every assistance to the expanding development of Voluntary Overseas Services. Miss Vickers, who has worked in Africa, Malaya and Indonesia, and has considerable first-hand knowledge of British Honduras, thought that the amount of training given was insufficient. Mr. Vosper's comment on this was, "I find that a most difficult subject, because the more time spent in training the less time there is for the volunteer to serve overseas . . . but I am always open to consider this aspect." Miss Vickers expressed the hope that the movement will develop among girls. "If girls can gain experience overseas in this way, it will be invaluable to them in their future life," she added. She said that the education of women and girls in school and club life is very important for the developing countries, and she hoped that the number of girl volunteers would soon equal that of the boys. (December 12).

Hear, Hear

During the second reading of the British Museum Bill Mr. Thompson, who has been a family trustee (that is a representative of one of the great families on whose bequests the Museum was founded) for many years, agreed that the Bill was necessary but voiced misgivings about some of its provisions. He disliked the idea of the appointment of fifteen out of twenty-five trustees by the Prime Minister. He feared that this might lead to

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

St. Joan's International Alliance. May we remind members that at the Council Meeting in Orleans last May, the annual subscription for individual members was raised from £1 sterling to thirty shillings. Subscriptions (which include *The Catholic Citizen*) are now due. We would much appreciate their "prompt attention."

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Saudi Arabia. It is reported that the Saudi Arabian Ministers' Council may soon implement the Government's proposed social reforms. The most important of these reforms is undoubtedly the liberation of slaves and the prohibition of slavery. St. Joan's Alliance has long had the slavery question very much at heart; members will no doubt remember the declaration made on behalf of the Alliance to the Committee of the Non-Governmental Organisations of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at Geneva on July 11th, 1962. (See *The Catholic Citizen* for August 15th, 1962.) Mademoiselle Archinard's closing words were: "The slaves have probably never even heard of the United Nations, but countless men and women have raised their voices on their behalf. Shall not these voices be heard?"

* * *

Australia. In the last Federal election, Mrs. Marie Breen (Liberal) won a seat in the Senate for Victoria, and Dame Annabel Rankin (Liberal) was re-elected for Queensland. Dame Annabel is now Government Whip in the Senate. Women are further represented by three non-retiring members (each State has ten Senators, five of whom retire every three years); they are Ivy Wedgwood (Liberal, Victoria), Nancy Buttfeld (Liberal, South Australia) and Dorothy Tangney (A.L.P., Western Australia). Nancy Buttfeld and Dorothy Tangney are temporary chairmen of Committees. The latter (who, incidentally, is a Catholic) has held her seat since 1943 and was Australia's first woman Senator. It is regretted that since Dame Enid Lyons retired, there has been no woman in the House of Representatives; in sixty-two years only two women have been elected—Dame Enid was elected as long ago as 1943.

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Iraq. Al-Hikma University, Baghdad recently opened its doors to women. In its freshmen class of one hundred and seventy three students, forty-four are women. The University is conducted by American Jesuits.

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Monaco. Under the new Constitution, all men and women aged twenty-five years or over will have the right to vote.

a "jobs for boys" outlook. He wanted rather to ensure that only people with the highest qualifications would be appointed and was against excluding women. This last remark brought a cheer from Mrs. White. Mr. Thompson mentioned that one of the present trustees is a most distinguished lady, the president of the Society of Antiquaries.

Entrance to the Medical Profession

Mr. Grey asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the ratio of women to men students admitted to medical schools since 1951. Mr. du Cann gave a table of figures which contained this information: in 1953 the ratio of women to men students was 1 in 3 (645 women 1,935 men). By 1962 the proportion of women to men had risen slightly to 1 in 2.8 (715: 2,022) (December 21st).

C. M. Cheke

HOUSE OF LORDS REFORM

The report of the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament on Lords Reform was published on December 17th, 1962. It recommends that all peers who succeed to peerages of England, Great Britain and the United Kingdom may, if they so wish, surrender them for life, but adds that those who have had peerages conferred on them should not be allowed to surrender their titles, though hereditary peers who have already succeeded should be permitted to do so. This would entitle them to vote at Parliamentary elections and be eligible for election to the House of Commons. The report also recommends—and this is a reform long overdue—that peeresses in their own right should be admitted to the House of Lords, irrespective of any express prohibition in their Patents against sitting in the House of Lords, and that they should be enabled to surrender their peerages on the same terms and with the same consequences as the peers. If the report is approved, one of the remaining constitutional and one of the most anachronistic discriminations against women will be abolished.

Should the report be adopted, the following peeresses will be entitled to take their seats in the Lords: Baroness Beaumont, Baroness Berkeley, Baroness Berners, Baroness Burton, Countess of Cromartie, Baroness Darcy de Knayth, Viscountess Daventry, Baroness de Ross, Countess of Dysart, Countess of Errol, Baroness Furnivall, Baroness Kinloss, Countess of Loudoun, Baroness Lucas of Crudwell, Baroness Nairne, Countess of Newburgh, Baroness Ravensdale, (also a life peeress) Baroness Ruthven of Freeland, Countess of Seafield, Baroness Strange of Knokin, Baroness Zouche.

While the report has come under a good deal of fire, this particular recommendation would not appear to have been attacked.

Italy. The Constitutional Commission of the Chamber of Deputies has voted unanimously for equality of women with men; at present women are barred from public office in the Law and in the Foreign and Diplomatic Services. Plainly, Italy, in the light of the great advances she has made since the war, has finally realised that she cannot lag behind in the vital matter of sex equality.

This new attitude contrasts strikingly with the following instance of mediaevalism. An Italian amnesty recently freed almost all prisoners sentenced for less than three years—with the exception of women jailed for adultery! Adultery, it should be noted, is not a crime for men!

* * *

The Sixth National Conference of the *Unione Guiriste Italiane* will be held in Rome, January 31st-February 3rd, 1963. The themes of the Conference are (1) Family Law and the principle of moral and juridical equality between husband and wife; (2) Special aspects of crime prevention and treatment of offenders.

The collaboration of any interested persons will be welcomed on application to the Secretariat, Via Civinini 69, Rome.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen", January 15th, 1938

An excellent letter which appeared in a recent issue of *The Catholic Herald* from H. O'Brien, supports a contention we have often upheld:

"Does the Church, *ex cathedra*, teach that woman is a human person and therefore (by definition) a free being created by God for Himself? If so, the definition itself implies her right to self-determination. So long as she is striving to know, love and serve God in this life and to be happy with Him forever in the next. If the Church does not regard woman as a human person then what is her classification in the hierarchy of created beings?"

Further, are those talents which enable certain women to hold honourable positions as doctors, lawyers, civil servants or Members of Parliament to be regarded as gifts of God. If so, surely the fortunate possessors have not only the right, but the duty to develop these gifts to the best of their ability to His greater glory—no matter how many men, desiring their jobs for themselves, may regard them with every malice and all uncharitableness. Or, alternatively, must we regard every woman who has not the vocation for charring, nursing, teaching or millinery as possessed of the devil?"

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by

NANCY STEWART PARNELL, B.A.

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