

## Golden Jubilee Number

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

*Organ of St. Joan's Alliance (formerly The Catholic Women's Suffrage Society).  
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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*

## Then and Now 1911—1961

By Vera Douie

When in 1911 the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society was launched, the women's suffrage campaign was at its height. Forty-five years of effort had not secured the right to a Parliamentary vote. True, the Women's Movement had not been without its victories. Women could vote in Local Government elections, sit on Local Councils and serve on Boards of Guardians; married women since 1882 had had the ownership and control of their property; the education of girls had immeasurably improved, and the Universities were open to them, though at Oxford and Cambridge this did not carry with it the right to a degree. The citadel of the medical profession had been stormed, and the outer defences of the Civil Service had fallen.

Apart, however, from the absence of political rights, the position of women left much to be desired. The disfranchised met with little attention in Parliament. It had taken twenty-six years to secure the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, and much arduous labour had gone to effect such small improvements in the legal position of women as had been made. Opportunities of employment were small. Except for medicine and teaching the liberal professions were closed to women, and ten shillings was the average weekly wage of industrial women workers, who were also the worst victims of the sweating system. The infant mortality rate in 1911 was one hundred and thirty per thousand births, and the maternal mortality rate round about four per thousand.

The key to improvement in other spheres was the vote, and it was on this that the C.W.S.S. and other women's suffrage societies concentrated, until the Representation of the People Act of 1918 enfranchised such women as were over thirty and householders or the wives of householders. The effect of enfranchisement was immediately felt, and has resulted in a steady flow of legislation affecting the rights of women. The very same year, the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act gave women

the right not only to elect, but to be elected, and in the following year Lady Astor was returned in a bye-election as Member for the Sutton Division of Plymouth. In 1928, fears of the adverse effect of women in politics having somewhat abated, women became eligible to vote on the same terms as men. Thirty years later, the Life Peerages Act brought women life peers into the Upper House. In 1948, the British Nationality Act gave women the right to retain their British nationality on marriage to an alien, and prevented the automatic acquisition of British nationality by an alien woman marrying a British subject.

In the economic sphere, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act opened the way into the professions and the higher ranks of the Civil Service, and made women eligible for the magistrature and jury service, and for all public offices.

In 1925, the Guardianship of Infants Act gave to mothers a new status as parents, and the 1945 Family Allowances Act also recognised the woman's standing in the home by decreeing that the children's allowances should be paid to the mother. The Inheritance (Family Provision) Act of 1938 removed the power from either spouse completely to disinherit their partner, and the Intestates' Estates Act of 1952 very greatly improved the position of the widow or widower where no will had been made. The Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, 1934, and the Married Women (Restraint upon Anticipation) Act, 1949, removed the last disabilities of married women as owners of property. Additional protection was given to girls by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 1922, which raised the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen. Maternity and Child Welfare legislation, together with advances in medical science, has caused the infant mortality rate to drop from one hundred and thirty to twenty-three per thousand, and the maternal mortality rate in 1959 was point thirty-nine per thousand.

At the last General Election, twenty-five women were elected to the House of Commons, and there are now six women life peers in the House of Lords. In 1929, Miss Margaret Bondfield was appointed Minister of Labour, and in all, four women have been cabinet ministers and twelve have held junior ministerial posts. Two women are heads of their Departments in the Civil Service, and there are very many other high-ranking women civil servants. In 1946, the marriage bar was removed. Women have come to the fore in all the professions opened to them by the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon is a monument to women in architecture. Five women have "taken silk" as K.C.s or Q.C.s. Though no woman is yet one of H.M.'s Judges, one woman is recorder of Burnley, and another a Metropolitan Police magistrate. Equal pay has been achieved in the Civil Service, the teaching profession, local government employment and the nationalised industries, but is far from being realised in commerce and industry generally. The average wage of the industrial woman worker now exceeds £7 a week, but is still only about half that of her male fellow-worker.

There had been, too, a notable change in the climate of opinion. Though the forces of reaction still occasionally rear their ugly heads, and though the price of liberty remains an eternal vigilance, the equality of the sexes is now widely recognised, and the capacity of women no longer doubted.

In all the work that had brought these changes, St. Joan's Alliance has been to the fore. It was, in fact, the spearhead in the long fight for the retention of her British nationality by women marrying aliens. Perhaps, too, more than all other women's societies, the Alliance has been concerned with the condition of women in the emerging countries.

Not all changes have been such as the Alliance could approve. It found it necessary to protest vigorously at the Street Offences Act of 1959. Though based on a laudable wish to remove the stigma of illegitimacy, many must feel that the Legitimacy Act of the same year makes a mockery of the concept of monogamous marriage. Divorce laws have led to a greater instability in marriage, and there has been a sad decline in the standards of sex morality. Peeresses in their own right are still debarred from the House of Lords; the incomes of husbands and wives are still jointly assessed for purposes of taxation; equal pay applies only in a very limited field, and equal opportunity, especially in industry and commerce, are still far to seek. There is still plenty of work for St. Joan's to do.

Nevertheless, the little group which founded the Alliance in a teashop in Oxford Street on the Feast of the Annunciation fifty years ago would probably not be too discouraged at the progress which has been made.

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS

The United Nations is honouring St. Joan's Alliance by sending a representative to the International Council Meeting at the end of May. It will be a great pleasure to welcome the Secretary General's representative, Madame Grinberg-Vinaver, whose assistance in her capacity as chief of the Section on the Status of Women has been so generously given to the Non-Governmental Organizations.

\* \* \*

We have used the word *jubilate* as the title of the many tributes which we have blushing allowed ourselves to publish, for we feel this, our Golden Jubilee, is pre-eminently an occasion of joy and thanksgiving.

During the half century we have gained many friends and some converts and we rejoice at having been privileged to play a part in the revolutionary change in the status of women which Miss Douie has so ably described.

But we are not yet content, there is still much to work for and to achieve.

\* \* \*

On April 28th, Mr. Butler, Leader of the House, tabled the motion that "it is expedient that a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed" to consider the composition of the House of Lords. We note with satisfaction that the terms of reference include the consideration "whether, and if so what, changes should be made in the rights of peers and peeresses in their own right in regard to eligibility to sit in either House of Parliament and to vote at Parliamentary elections."

\* \* \*

Twice during the debate on the Budget, Dame Irene Ward took the opportunity to call attention to the case of people living on small fixed incomes. On April 20th, because surtax payers will have relief whilst those for whom she is concerned will not, she voted with the Opposition. On April 25th, she again demonstrated her disapproval of the Budget proposals by ostentatiously abstaining from voting on the Finance Bill.

\* \* \*

The memorial to Dame Vera in Westminster Cathedral is now completed. It is near St. Joan's shrine and is a mosaic by Aelred Bartlett, representing St. Nicholas, patron of seafarers. Inscribed on the floor are the words: "Pray for Dame Vera Laughton Mathews in whose memory this mosaic was given."

The memorial was erected by Dame Vera's family with the help of a contribution from the Memorial Fund launched by the Association of Wrens in which St. Joan's Alliance shared.

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## The Status of Women Commission

Under the calm and methodical presidency of Madame Tamar Eshel, delegate of Israel, the discussions at the Fifteenth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in Geneva, March, 1961, followed the tradition of courtesy and seriousness for which the Commission is noted. In particular, the very numerous representatives of the non-Governmental Organizations had the impression, not only that they were permitted to speak, but that they did not speak in vain.

There were several familiar figures among the delegates, notably the indefatigable Madame Lefauchaux (France); a new delegate came from the U.S.A., Mrs. Tillett, well known in the feminist struggle; and from the United Kingdom, the very gracious Miss Joan Vickers, in place of Miss Tomlinson, whose activity was transferred to the ranks of the non-Governmental Organizations.

Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaver, Chief of the Section on the Status of Women, represented the Secretary-General and Mrs. Pilar Santander-Downing acted as secretary to the Commission.

**Political Rights.** After having heard of progress in this field from documents and the delegates themselves, and having heard certain reservations expressed concerning the situation in the non-self-governing territories and the effective participation of women in public life, the Commission requested the United Nations to issue a revised edition of the pamphlet on the *Political Education of Women*, in view of its wide appeal.

**Consultative Services in the Field of Human Rights.** The Commission expressed satisfaction at the results of the Regional Seminars on the Status of Women, held at Bangkok (1957), Bogota (1959), and above all at Addis Ababa (1960); and the hope of similar success for those to be held at Bucharest (1961) and Singapore (1962). The effect of these regional seminars should be prolonged by similar reunions on the national or local plane, such as the National Seminar, held in Argentina after Bogota, which had exercised so profound an influence on the women of South America.

Arising out of the report of the Seminar at Addis Ababa, several delegates and representatives of non-Governmental Organizations underlined the determination formally expressed by the African women, to eliminate the custom of *ritual mutilations*, and asking the support of the World Health Organization. The representative of W.H.O., having to obey her mandate, repeated that the W.H.O. judged that these operations depended on factors outside its competence, and that it could not respond to the request for medical information, as no government had made such a request.

The representative of St. Joan's International Alliance added that the World Health Organization would lose an opportunity to exercise a directing rôle on the health of Africans, if it did not set itself

to this task without delay. After a discussion the following resolution, 2 (XV), proposed by France, the United Kingdom and Colombia, was passed by thirteen in favour and five abstentions (U.S.S.R., Poland, Czechoslovakia, Cuba and Finland):

**The Economic and Social Council** draws the attention of the World Health Organization to the Report of the 1960 Seminar on the Participation of Women in Public Life (Document ST/TAO/HR.9) and particularly to paragraphs 60, 61, and 62, and requests the World Health Organization to inform the Council whether it deems it possible to meet the wishes clearly expressed by African women by undertaking a study of the medical aspects involved in the customary practices to which too many women are still being subjected.

**Draft Convention and Recommendation on Marriage.** A very long discussion took place on two projects of international instruments intended to assure, in marriage, free consent given before witnesses; registration of marriages; and a reasonable minimum age of marriage which St. Joan's International Alliance, together with many non-Governmental Organizations, and also many governments, would like to have fixed at sixteen years. The delicate question was that of the age (which was relegated to the second article). In place of the draft drawn up by the Commission at its previous Session, a Convention was finally accepted, leaving to each State the responsibility of fixing the minimum age suitable to itself.

The Iron Curtain countries—supported by the observers of Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan, declared for a minimum age of sixteen years. But the United Kingdom pointed out that in some of its territories the age was as low as nine, or there was no limit at all. The Low Countries would not embarrass the other countries; Finland could not recommend an age of sixteen years, lower than in its own country.

Certain organizations—for example, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, pronounced also against a universal minimum age of marriage.

In order to save, at least in the Recommendation, a minimum age (which the Alliance continued to urge should be sixteen) other delegates made concessions.

Finally, the Draft Recommendation was voted unanimously, laying down a minimum age of marriage of fifteen years. The two drafts (Convention and Recommendation) were sponsored by the Argentine, France, Greece, Israel, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

**Economic Rights.** The Commission considered the valuable report of the International Labour Organization on discrimination in employment, and requested the Economic and Social Council (1) to recommend to States Members to promote opportunities for women who desire employment and to eliminate discrimination on the right of women, in-

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AND

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

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"The Catholic Citizen."

## Jubilate Deo

### Some Tributes to St. Joan's Alliance

#### His Excellency Archbishop Romolo Carboni, Apostolic Nuncio in Peru :

I offer you and your splendid organization my sincere congratulations.

The work of St. Joan's Alliance is of fundamental importance to the life of the Church. There are those who do not recognize that Catholic doctrine and morality must be taught and practised not only in the home and the school, but also in the market place, the law court, the hospital and parliament.

The only revolutionary doctrine in the world that makes any sense is the Christian revolution, in which we love one another as Christ has loved us. Groups like St. Joan's can be very effective in bringing that profound truth home to the public at large, who need it more than they know.

When the novelty seekers cry out that Christianity has failed, we must reply in the words of your immortal Chesterton: "Christianity has not failed; it has never been tried!" St. Joan's is a powerful force for persuading more people to put Christianity to work in their personal lives and business.

May I take this opportunity to express to all the members of St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance my profound esteem for the outstanding Christian work you are accomplishing and to wish you continued success in the future. May God bless you all!

#### His Grace Archbishop David Mathew :

I have, as you know, always had a real sympathy for the St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance. It has worked through the years with so much sincerity and candour.

#### The Right Reverend Monsignor Duchemin :

I expect you remember Miss O'Halloran who introduced me to your work over forty years ago. I have never ceased to support it ever since. You must have done a great deal to give a right orientation to the movement for safeguarding the proper position of women. All good wishes and congratulations.

#### Rt. Hon. Lord Pethick-Lawrence of Peaslake :

Good wishes for your Golden Jubilee! Your support helped to win the Vote for Women. Now its task is to promote the activities of women most fruitful of benefit to the community.

#### Sœur Marie-André du Sacré Coeur of the White Sisters :

It is a great joy to send you my most sincere congratulations. For fifty years you have fought the good fight on behalf of Womanhood, and of African Womanhood in particular. For that, as you know, I am deeply grateful.

It would have been such a joy for me to be with you for the rejoicings, but, as you will understand, Uganda is a little too far away!

I assure you I shall be with you in thought, the Alliance with all its members, will have a special place in my prayers during the Meeting from 27th-30th May.

May God continue to bless your work and may He give increase to St. Joan's Alliance.

I wish you every success and from the bottom of my heart I say: *Ad multos annos!*

#### Dr. Marga Klompé, Minister of Social Welfare, Netherlands :

It is my pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the British branch of St. Joan's.

It must be a great satisfaction to look back and realize how much public opinion has changed since St. Joan's started to promote its ideals.

It will give all of us a new impetus to continue our effort, which I would like to formulate as follows :

To promote in legislation (national and international) in public opinion and especially in the minds of women, the acknowledgement that although woman is different from man she has her own responsibility to contribute in her feminine way to the well-being of mankind and needs the rights and privileges which will enable her to assume these responsibilities in all fields of action.

God bless the British branch of St. Joan's.

#### Mrs. Corbett Ashby, President of Honour, International Alliance of Women :

Please accept my warmest congratulations with my best wishes that the next years may be so fruitful that there will be no need to celebrate another Jubilee.

Personally I have nothing but golden memories of our work together and as past president of the International Alliance of Women, I am most grateful for friendly co-operation between the two organizations.

The International Alliance missed you badly but we soon realized that your work in St. Joan's was of even greater value for the Cause of Women. This because of the special appeal which made St. Joan's the best spokesman for us all in some cases.

We are specially grateful for the work of St. Joan's with the International Labour Organization, with the Trusteeship Council and in the fight against ritual operations, and child marriage. In this latter we recognize your great competence.

#### Madame Magdeleine Leroy-Boy, President, St. Joan's International Alliance :

Ainsi qu'un enfant, déjà d'âge mûr, est heureux de fêter les noces d'or de ses parents, l'Alliance Internationale se tourne avec joie et fierté vers sa section britannique—à laquelle elle doit le jour!—pour lui présenter, à l'occasion de son Jubilé, ses félicitations pour l'oeuvre accomplie, ses vœux pour l'avenir et l'expression de sa reconnaissance pour tout ce qu'elle lui doit.

L'Alliance britannique fit oeuvre de pionnier . . . et les paroles que S.S. Pie XII prononça en 1945 sur les devoirs de la femme chrétienne dans la vie civile et politique: "elle doit concourir avec l'homme au bien de la cité parce quelle est son égal en dignité" vengeaient les admirables "suffragettes" catholiques de 1911 des sarcasmes et des calomnies qu'elles subirent alors. Ces quelques femmes, acharnées à la poursuite de leur idéal, luttèrent contre vent et marée et nul ne s'étonna que leur influence franchit bientôt les mers.

Désormais, sous la bannière de notre vénérée patronne, c'est une organisation internationale qui a le privilège d'avoir la section britannique comme fille aînée! C'est dire que, loin de songer au repos, celle-ci doit continuer avec sa vitalité coutumière sa marche en avant . . . vers la célébration de son centenaire!—apportant ainsi à l'Alliance Internationale l'appui indispensable de ses traditions, de son expérience et de son esprit apostolique.

#### The Dowager Lady Nunburnholme :

As a fellow member of the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations, I have been in close touch for many years with the Alliance. This has given me a profound admiration for the pioneering qualities of its work and for the great care with which all its statements are prepared. One can always depend upon their accuracy which is a tribute in itself.

All good wishes for the next fifty years.

#### From Miss Gertrude Baer, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom :

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to salute St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. It has been a joy to co-operate with your representatives here in Geneva. It was a relief to see them enter the conference room because we knew we could rely on them as defending with singular courage and perseverance even the questions considered as delicate and controversial among those regarding the dignity of woman, her freedom and independence in the civilization of her country.

St. Joan's observers are known at the United Nations for their uncompromising and always well-documented contributions in questions under discussion.

I personally want to express my gratitude to St. Joan's representatives for having known how to maintain, through the decades, the high level of their work, their integrity and their profound sense of responsibility for their sisters everywhere.

St. Joan's work will be finished only on the day when the dignity of women in whatever area of our planet, her full freedom and independence—social, economic and political—are enrooted in the law and the practice of the society, of which they are citizens. May your work continue to be blessed!

#### Miss Margaret Flynn, Melbourne, Vice-President, St. Joan's International Alliance :

Loving greetings and congratulations. Many of us regret that we cannot be with you on this golden occasion! What memories it will invoke!

It is inspiring to think that the Alliance has brought together so many from distant fields, so far apart, from Australia, Argentina and Lebanon, and many other lands, to pool their ideas for the good of mankind.

May the contacts continue and may we still look to our dear Mother Organization in gratitude and prayerful co-operation!

#### Professor G. McEntee, Ph.D., New York, Vice-President St. Joan's International Alliance :

It has been my pleasure during the years to note the steady, though at times too slow, movement toward the changing of the status of women, from that of second class to first class citizens in so many nations of the world, and to realize how significant a part St. Joan's has played in establishing a recognition of the principle that "women are people."

#### Dr. Maria Schlüter Hermkes, Vice-President, St. Joan's International Alliance, Germany :

The good wishes that are being sent from every continent are due to two reasons :

St. Joan's Alliance is a group of *pioneers*. As the first organization of Catholic women concerned with the legal rights of women, it represented—without a trace of parochialism—among neutral circles a "présence catholique" in national and international fields, especially in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and in the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations. In the year 1924 it was the first women's organization to bring the situation of African women before the League of Nations, and since then has not ceased to work for those who cannot themselves fight for their human rights—and it has done this with considerable success.

Although a comparatively small group, St. Joan's has a universal character through its knowledgeable, untiring and selfless activity. Everyone who works for women in international fields knows St. Joan's badge and they regard it with honour, trust, and friendship.

#### Mrs. Grabinska, Vice-President, St. Joan's International Alliance, New York :

I am writing this message during Easter Season. That season's greatest gift was Hope. Hope for people, for all nations and for humanity. Let our Alliance share and enjoy this precious gift during its Golden Jubilee.

There are—behind us—the long years of steady indomitable endeavours towards the betterment of social and political conditions of women all over the world, and we may note proudly many achievements created or precipitated by us. Ahead of us, however, there are still many problems to be solved. Hence, today, while appraising the past we must look towards the future. Let us not be afraid of any trials and difficulties which are still blocking the narrow path of progress. Indeed, we measure the growth of a tree by the number of its scars, and it is through its mother's pains that a child is born. So it is also with a movement like ours, and its goals.

Let us summon all our faith, hope, charity, and courage, to face the challenge of the days ahead.

May Our Lord and St. Joan bless all of you in this future work.

#### Docteur Adel Hauwel, Hon. Secretary, Open Door International :

I want to send you my best congratulations on your magnificent work during the whole half century and my best wishes for the future of your organization and its gallant fight for women's emancipation throughout the world. I deeply appreciate your work.

**Miss Anna T. Brennan, President St. Joan's Alliance, Victoria, Australia :**

How clearly I remember my first contact with St. Joan's Alliance. It was at a gathering of the British Commonwealth League in London. I was there introduced to that large and large-hearted woman lawyer, Chrystal Macmillan.

Miss Macmillan knew that I was an Australian, and soon learned that I was a feminist. "You ought to meet St. Joan's Alliance" she said. I asked who they were. I was soon to know for that night I was introduced to Florence Barry.

I came nearer that evening than I had ever done before to an understanding of what Keats felt when he spoke of "Some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken."

A Catholic feminist organization! That was what my mind and my heart had almost unconsciously been seeking.

I approached womanhood in an age when the tide was turning, when the Victorian view that no ambition for one's daughters was as admirable as the desire to assure for them a life of complete idleness, was crumbling.

But Catholics in Australia were ultra conservative. No Catholic girls' school was prepared to give to its pupils the education necessary for entering the University. The handful who did enter did so by the medium of secular schools. When I made my own break-through I was the only Catholic woman undergraduate in the University.

To encounter a large body of highly intelligent and deeply devout Catholic women expressing their views on all kinds of public questions and demanding recognition of the equality of women seemed too good to be true.

No one can estimate how much the parent body of St. Joan's and its satellites in other countries have done to break down prejudice and clear away the injustices which arise from prejudice in the fields of education, employment and remuneration, by its attacks on public scandals from which women were the main sufferers. Some dramatic triumphs can be recorded but the main results have been psychological—a readjustment of people's minds to acknowledge that women are complete human beings. For that, briefly and unanswerably, is the definition of feminist.

May the future be as great as the past!

**Mrs. Mary Tenison Woods, C.B.E., New South Wales, Australia :**

Warmest congratulations to St. Joan's on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee. My mind goes back to early 1946 when I first became acquainted in London with this unique organization and its distinguished and most beguiling officers—its President, Dame Vera Laughton Mathews; its Secretary, Miss Florence Barry, and the others of that day. I recognized only then the magnificent work they and their predecessors in the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society had done in connection with the campaign for equal political rights for women.

We in Australia had taken this too much for granted as we were among the first four countries in the world to grant women equal political rights with men. I am afraid, however, that we had rested on our laurels since those early days at the turn of the century. We had very little to show for them as we had had only a negligible number of women in either Commonwealth or State Parliaments. As a notable exception I, of course, must mention a distinguished Australian Vice-President of St. Joan's Alliance. In Dame Enid Lyons we had the first, and alas so far the only, woman member of the Commonwealth House of Representatives, and the first and only woman Cabinet Minister.

But I think it was not until I took up my recent post with the United Nations that I realized the important work that St. Joan's International Social and Political Alliance

was doing in the international field. I, there, had special knowledge of the Alliance's contributions in connection with the Human Rights Commission and the Status of Women Commission, in particular. St. Joan's fully availed itself of the responsibilities and privileges conferred on non-governmental organizations in consultative status; in doing so it helped to promote the rights of women in all fields. In later years it laid particular emphasis on the status of women in less developed countries, and on the need to safeguard their rights in the constitutions of the newly emerging sovereign states.

**Mrs. Jean Daly, Former President, St. Joan's Alliance, New South Wales :**

Congratulations on the completion of fifty years of invaluable work and influence.

It was with inspired foresight that the founders of our Alliance so early in the century realized that women would never be able to play their full part as citizens unless they were prepared to work without ceasing for their full rights as human beings.

Thank you for providing a channel through which this work could be carried on most effectively. You should be proud to observe the results you have achieved throughout the world. May your work continue to prosper.

**Mrs. Alice Hemming, President, British Commonwealth League :**

On behalf of the British Commonwealth League, I extend my warm congratulations to your splendid organization. We are proud to have you as affiliates of our society, and we admire the magnificent work you do for women, known and unknown, here and everywhere, in the cause of justice and of humanity. Long may St. Joan's flourish and long may we have the privilege of association with you.

**Miss Philippa Strachey, C.B.E., Hon. Secretary, The Fawcett Society :**

Your Golden Jubilee is a call for jubilation from all of us, commemorating, as it does, fifty years of devoted work and fifty years of reluctant progress in the women's movement.

At the time when the struggle for the franchise was at its height there came into existence several sectional suffrage societies to organize support from definite groups, and amongst these the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society was at once noteworthy. It rapidly gathered strength, and far from fading away when the vote had been won, the principles on which it was based and the spirit by which it was animated led to the extension of its activities beyond the borders of this country. St. Joan's took to heart the interests of women in benighted lands where their identity as human beings was barely recognized; work in this field took an important place in the activities of the Alliance, and has been of great value.

Some years before the attainment of this Society's Golden Jubilee there was occasion for a preliminary jubilation when the Vatican bestowed the high honour of its Cross on Miss Barry, whose name seems inseparable from that of the Society she has served as Honorary Secretary since its foundation. We include therefore tribute to the untiring devotion and administrative powers of Miss Barry in the congratulations offered on this occasion.

**Miss Marian Reeves, President, The Women's Freedom League :**

The Women's Freedom League sends cordial greetings to St. Joan's Alliance.

St. Joan's is just eighteen months younger than the Women's Freedom League, and during all our joint lives we have worked in close co-operation and served together on several co-ordinating committees.

For many years it has been my habit, when called upon

to make a decision on some important subject, to ring up St. Joan's to find out what they were doing. It has, in fact, been a great joy and a great privilege to work in unison with an Alliance so clear-sighted on all matters of equality.

We send them our heartiest congratulations and greetings on attaining their Golden Jubilee, and our best wishes for future usefulness.

**Miss Pierotti, National Union of Women Teachers :**

At their last meeting, the Central Council of the National Union of Women Teachers sent warmest congratulations and good wishes to St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee.

Straight thinking, clear vision and undeviating feminism, have characterized St. Joan's since it was first formed to work for the enfranchisement of women, and for fifty years the Alliance has held the esteem and admiration of feminists for its farsighted, fearless and always well-informed work for equality between men and women.

The National Union of Women Teachers has been proud to co-operate with St. Joan's on many occasions and would particularly pay tribute to Miss Barry for the unremitting work and inspiration she had given to the movement.

May the work be continued until the full equal status of men and women is established.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS—Continued from page 33**

With regret we record the death of Miss Charlotte A. L. Marsh on April 21st. She was one of the most active members of the W.S.P.U. which she joined in 1908, being drawn to it by a passion for justice, backed by her knowledge of the appalling conditions under which many women worked and brought up their families—knowledge which she gained as one of the first women sanitary inspectors.

Charlie Marsh was a beautiful and striking figure and she was often chosen to lead the great suffrage processions. She bore a close resemblance to our own Gabrielle Jeffery. With pride, Charlie wore her prisoner's badge which she earned by being three times imprisoned; she was one of the first to go on hunger strike and to suffer forcible feeding in the fight for votes for women.

The Alliance was represented at her funeral by the hon. secretary. May she rest in peace.

\* \* \*

"A Venture in Faith," the history of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society and St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, has been written by Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, B.A. We look forward to selling many copies of this inspiring story through our office in the near future.

\* \* \*

We hope as many members as possible will attend the Mass of Thanksgiving at Westminster Cathedral on St. Joan's Day, Tuesday, May 30th, at 9 a.m. and that they will afterwards pay a visit to Dame Vera's Memorial.

Congratulations to Mrs. Eileen Hoare, O.B.E., who won Putney for the Conservatives at the recent London County Council elections.

Mrs. Hoare has had fifteen years experience on the L.C.C. as Alderman, County Councillor and Co-opted member. She has served on the General Purposes, Education and Health Committees, and on the Children's Committee since its inception in 1948. She now serves on the Education Committee and on the Children's Committee. Mrs. Hoare was elected to the executive committee of St. Joan's Alliance at the annual meeting on March 25th.

\* \* \*

We ask the prayers of our readers for our member Mrs. L. de Fonseka, the news of whose death in Ceylon, on November 19th last, has only just reached us. We offer our deep sympathy to her sister Mrs. Constance de Silva, also a member of the Alliance. R.I.P.

\* \* \*

Congratulations to Mrs. Avril Makhloof on the birth of her daughter on April 9th at Kuwait. We wish Eliana Mary and her parents all blessings.

**THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMISSION—**

*Continued from page 34*

cluding married women, to work; and (2) to ask the International Labour Organization to report further on the subject of equal pay, and to continue its studies on discrimination with particular reference to cases where employers are responsible for the cost of social welfare benefits. It also requested the Secretary-General and the International Labour Organization to bring the study of part-time work up-to-date and to continue the study on the access of women to training and employment in certain professional and technical fields.

Finally, it requested the Economic and Social Council to ask State Members to consider granting to husband and wife the choice of being taxed jointly or separately on their individual earned incomes.

**Access of Women to Education.** Two resolutions were voted, one on equality of treatment in the teaching profession, the other on illiteracy. In the discussion several delegates or representatives demanded that girls should have the opportunity of following the same courses of study as boys.

**Future Work.** In examining the future work of the Commission it was agreed that the Commission should undertake a study of the conditions and the legal effects of divorce, separation, and annulment of marriage.

I. Archinard

**HON. TREASURER'S NOTE**

Please remember to send us a jubilee gift.

Noreen K. Carr

**ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE****Eighteenth Council Meeting—London**

**Saturday, May 27th**—Morning and afternoon: Council Meeting. Evening: Reception given by the President.

**Sunday, May 28th**—Morning: Council Meeting. Afternoon: closed session.

**Monday, May 29th**—Morning: free. Afternoon: by kind invitation of the British chairman, Dr. Shattock, coach drive via Runnymede, Windsor and Eton to Wargrave—tea at riverside.

**Tuesday, May 30th**—9 a.m.: Mass of Thanksgiving at Westminster Cathedral, offered by the Rev. Christopher Laughton Mathews, followed by breakfast. 10.45 a.m.: Excursion to Hatfield. 7.30 p.m.: Jubilee Dinner.

**TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO**  
*E. M. Turner in the "Catholic Citizen",*  
15th May, 1936

On April 22nd the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene celebrated its historic victory—the fiftieth anniversary of the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts—Acts which introduced the system of State regulation of prostitution into England.

The aim of all regulationists in all countries, was to prevent venereal disease and to maintain public order, and they were prepared to go to any length in the enslavement and degradation of the women concerned to gain these ends. Panic stricken by the increase of venereal disease they adopted the worst possible method of dealing with it. They failed to see that the male partners of the women they registered were, from a medical point of view, a far greater danger to the public health. They were blind to the medical futility of their system—though that futility is a medical commonplace today. They did not realize that the creation of a special group of women, set apart, labelled, exploited and outside the operation and practice of common law, must be detrimental to the general community. They did not, apparently, foresee that it must inevitably lead to the corruption of the police who were given such absolute and arbitrary control of these unhappy women. Still less did they realize that their system would, in due course, make it possible for a gang of organized traffickers to set up a lucrative trade, on an international scale, for the procuring of women and girls for prostitution, or that their "licensed" and "tolerated" houses would become a most convenient market for this trade. In short they failed to see that their system was nothing more than a particularly cruel form of slavery for which there was neither moral nor medical justification.—  
*A Great Victory*

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