

# 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*

## Freedom From Hunger

By P. D. Cummins

**Famine.** One morning, famine is front-page news. There are harrowing stories, pictures of men and women reduced to skeletons, of mothers too weak to feed their babies, of children with spindle limbs and monstrously distended stomachs. There is instant response to their needs: funds are opened, food and medical supplies are rushed to the stricken area. A famine like any disaster that involves the loss of many lives, makes the headlines, and so, for a few days, we are made aware of the full horror of starvation. But what of the one thousand million men, women and children, half the population of the world, who are living just above the starvation level—how often do we think of them? How many of us realise that this hidden hunger is as great a threat as the Atom Bomb, that unless the problem of feeding the hungry is solved, civilisation will not survive? Let us realise to the full all that depends on the success of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, blessed by the Holy Father when it was first introduced in 1960 by Doctor Sen, Director General of the Food and Agricultural Campaign of the United Nations. "We have confidence," Pope John said, "that the echo of our voice will reach beyond those who hear us now, to all our sons spread throughout the world... as a pressing invitation to play their part in this great gesture of generosity called the Freedom from Hunger Campaign."

The brotherhood of nations has accepted this "pressing invitation", but the ultimate solution of this immense problem depends on each one of us—we can and must help. We must shake off the apathy that statistics tend to produce and think of the misery of hidden hunger in human terms. Too many of us are under the impression that starvation is only to be found in the underdeveloped countries, in refugee camps, but let there be no mistake: despite all the technological achievement, the scientific progress in Christian Europe, hunger, malnutrition, under-nourishment continue to claim countless victims. Danilo Dolci focused the world's attention on a small Sicilian village where a child died of hunger. He lay down

on the little one's deathbed and fasted until the authorities were obliged to take action and alleviate the suffering in this particular locality. Since then, in his book "To Feed the Hungry", Dolci has collected the personal stories of those who know what it is to live on the verge of starvation. Here is just one instance. As a young couple were sitting down to their frugal meal of pasta, a little girl knocked at their door and asked if she might have the water in which they had boiled the pasta. They learnt to their horror that the child's family had had nothing but a crust or two for several days, that the mother had given birth to a new baby, and that in the hope that pasta water might yield a little nourishment that would enable her to suckle it, she had sent her small daughter round to the neighbours with the pitiful request. Let no-one suppose this is just an isolated instance: in Southern Italy, in the slums of Spain and Portugal, for example, the pattern is similar.

But these black spots are only specks on the map of world hunger. Can all the hungry be fed? The answer is yes, provided that our present knowledge of world food problems is applied widely and effectively, provided we all work together towards the end.

The Freedom from Hunger Campaign is now in its second year, and it is good to know that the United Kingdom Committee has greatly extended its scope. The Duke of Edinburgh, its patron, when he inaugurated the drive for funds in June, manifested that quality of humanity which has made him outstanding, when he spoke of the plight of the hungry, and the need to respect their feelings when tackling the problem of feeding them or rather in teaching them to feed themselves. Prince Philip said there were four points to bear in mind. First, the Campaign "must survey the areas where food is inadequate and establish whether it is due to malnutrition or under-nutrition." Secondly it must settle on remedies acceptable to the differing needs, tastes and situations of the peoples of the developing countries. An important point this, for food taboos persist—in



Uganda for instance, the older generation still believes that if a woman drinks milk and eats fish every day, she may become sterile. Thirdly, the Duke went on, the Campaign must "survey and establish the physical problems in the way of producing an acceptable remedy. Soil conditions, climate, pests, irrigation, drainage and general agricultural techniques all have a most important bearing on results." Finally (and here again we see how Prince Philip can enter into the lives and feelings of others), "it's no good scientists getting impatient because their ideas are not immediately accepted. Change is necessary, but it must be introduced with tact and understanding." The funds raised by the United Kingdom Committee will be spent only on work known to be of constructive and permanent value for the conquest of hunger. Mr. John Anderson of the Ministry of Agriculture quoted an old Chinese proverb that most aptly illustrated this aim: "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for one day; if you teach him to fish, you feed him for many days." The Committee has set up a Projects Advisory Group whose task will be to examine every proposal for development, whatever its source. The projects will vary widely, but those concerned with education and training, experiment and trials, pilot and demonstration projects, and development projects will be given priority. A beginning can be made immediately, but more and more money is needed in order that this work of vital importance to Britain and to the whole world may be successfully continued.

The problem of world hunger has led to many interesting suggestions, one of the most ingenious of which has been advanced by H. V. D. Hodson, Provost of Ditchley, Mr. Hodson, believes that the target figure that the Freedom from Hunger Campaign has set itself to raise—three million dollars in cash and kind in the next five years is quite inadequate to its object, and suggests that a World Food Bank should be set up, Participating countries would be classed as surplus or deficiency countries—and all would contribute "capital"—i.e. food—to the Bank according to quotas based on national resources. The accounts of this Bank would not be kept in money but in units of food-stuff value. This unit might be called a Vitale, and one Vitale would be equivalent to a ton of best grade hard-wheat. Mr. Hodson admits it would be extremely difficult to match drawings with deposits in respect to particular foodstuffs, but "even if the surplus countries had to write off their accumulated Vitale deposits, they would have had the benefit of stable values and a ready means of reducing their embarrassing excesses. They would also know that many millions of human beings had been better fed, and the dangerous gap narrowed between the rich and poor countries of the world." This last sentiment is fully in keeping with the Campaign described by the Holy Father as "this generous initiative that

corresponds so well with the true welfare of mankind and deserves to enlist the interest and collaboration of all men of good heart."

Generosity is the keynote of the Campaign and many societies such as Oxfam give unstinting, unremitting service to the cause of the hungry. Much has been done, much is being done, much more must be done. I would like to see in every place of worship a conspicuously placed collecting-box labelled "To Feed the Hungry"—if each member of a congregation gave only a penny a week, it would help to swell the funds—it would also remind us of our Christian duty. For it is our Christian duty to drive "the daughter of the night", as the Greek poet Hesiod described the fearful shade of starvation out of the world for ever. Hunger *can* be conquered—this is not wishful thinking, but a statement based on the most authoritative scientific evidence—and if we all combine and accept the Holy Father's "pressing invitation" to play our part in the Campaign, victory in the end is certain.

P. D. Cummins

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen", 15th November, 1937

We deeply regret the death, at the age of 84, of Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson. Young playgoers of the present day knew him not, but to those fortunate enough to remember him, he will always remain a figure of romance, beauty and dignity. Feminists remember too that Forbes Robertson supported the women's movement when it was a very unpopular one, and his devotion to St. Joan is shown in the speech he made in November 1930, during the St. Joan's Quincentenary Celebrations organised by our Alliance. At the meeting under the presidency of Cardinal Bourne, to appeal for funds for her memorial church at Rouen, he said:

"Educated in Rouen as a boy, I can claim to be familiar with every stone of that beautiful city, perhaps the most beautiful city of monuments in the world... and I ask dear St. Joan to look down upon us and to pardon our great sin, and forgive us, as I know she does, with her noble generous heart."—*Obituary*

#### JOSEPHINE BUTLER SOCIETY

The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, founded by Josephine Butler and with which the Alliance has co-operated happily for many years has now changed its name to The Josephine Butler Society. The following lecture will be held under its auspices.

Sixth Alison Neilans Memorial Lecture

TREVOR GIBBENS

M.D., M.R.C.S., D.P.M.

THE CLIENTS OF PROSTITUTES

Chairman: C. R. Hewitt

CAXTON HALL

THURSDAY, 29th NOVEMBER, 1962 at 6 p.m.

## Notes and Comments

Her Excellency, Senora Maria del Carmen de Guiterrez de Chittenden, the first woman ambassador accredited to Great Britain, has graciously consented to open our Christmas Sale at 2.30 on Saturday, November 24th, an honour which will ensure a large attendance.

The Sale will not be held as heretofore in the Clubroom of St. Patrick's Church, but in St. Patrick's Schools, Great Chapel Street, a turning off Oxford Street between Wardour Street and Dean Street, two minutes walk from this office.

Once again, we appeal to the generosity of our readers—we need goods to sell and buyers to buy. Anything large or small, that is new or saleable will be greatly appreciated—toys, toilet articles, Christmas cards, stationery, home-made jams, pickles, sweets, perfume, bath-salts, powder, handkerchiefs, knitted goods—these are just a few suggestions. Please send your donations to this office. Bring your friends along to our Sale and choose your Christmas presents from the stalls. Make up a party for lunch or tea—lunches will be served from 12.30 at a modest charge, and you can be sure of delicious home-made cakes for tea.

Miss Barbara Salt is the first British woman to be appointed ambassador. She will represent Great Britain in Israel when Mr. Patrick Hancock, the present ambassador, retires at the end of the year.

Miss Salt who joined the Foreign Service after acting during the war as Vice-Consul in Tangier, has gained a high reputation as a negotiator and has had a brilliant career. After appointments in Moscow and Washington, she became Consul General in Tel-Aviv, and is a specialist in questions concerning Israel. Between 1957 and 1960, she frequently acted as Chargé d'Affaires. Since then, she has been deputy head of the British delegation on disarmament at Geneva, and she has also represented Great Britain on the United Nations Economic and Social Council. At the time when Miss Salt would normally have entered the Foreign Service women were barred, and her diplomatic gifts might well have been wasted. Fortunately, this has not been the case; once she had joined the Service, she was marked out for success, and her great achievement has consequently come as no surprise.

We record with sorrow the death of Anna Brennan, one of the most distinguished and lovable members of St. Joan's International Alliance, and send our deep sympathy to her sister and to the Victoria Section of the Alliance whose President she was and of which she had been a foundation member. R.I.P. Her loss will be most keenly felt. A tribute from her colleagues in Australia appears on page 76.

This is the centenary year of the Women's Migration and Oversea Appointments Society, and naturally it is paying tribute to the remarkable Maria Rye who started it a hundred years ago.

Maria knew from personal experience how difficult it was for women to find employment in mid-Victorian England; if you were a "lady" you could be a governess—there were few other posts available to well-educated middle-class girls. When Maria learnt that more than 800 women had applied for a post at £15 a year, she determined that something must be done. Accordingly she started a society for the promotion of Women's employment, but when she approached employers they said to her: "Why don't you teach your young ladies to emigrate? Send them where men want wives, where shopkeepers, schools and hospitals will heartily welcome them." Maria was so impressed by this advice that she spoke fervently about it at a congress in Dublin: as a result, the Female Middle Class Emigration Society came into being, under the patronage of the Earl of Shaftesbury.

Maria did everything she could to give candidates an idea of the conditions they would find overseas. She was also careful to select only those who would make good. "They must be women of a certain stamp. Women who dislike work or who are not very sturdy in their principles are a thousand times better off at home."

The present Society is as careful as Maria Rye to select only those women whose character, personality and qualifications will enable them to adapt themselves to the conditions of the country of their choice, and who in their new homes overseas will make a contribution to the common good.

A history of the work Maria Rye began a hundred years ago is now in preparation—let us hope we shall not have to wait long for its publication for it will make fascinating reading.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy (née Ann Whittles) on the birth of their second child. We send our best wishes to James Michael who was born on October 14th.

May we remind our friends once more that our address is now 36a Dryden Chambers, 119 Oxford Street, London W.1. Please do not write to 8b as this is a very large block of offices and letters may well go astray.

We draw the attention of readers to the new advertisements on the back page, and hope for a good response.



## ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE

BRITISH SECTION OF ST. JOAN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE

AND

Editorial Office of "The Catholic Citizen"

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

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## Anna Brennan

On October 11th, St. Joan's Alliance, Victoria, was bereft of its valiant, wise and much loved president, Anna Brennan. May her soul rest in peace. She died in Melbourne from pneumonia, but had been in hospital, following a fall at the University on September 5th, three days after her eighty-third birthday. The sad news of her death was broadcast over the national radio and television network and appeared in the daily press under large headings as "Death of Pioneer Woman Lawyer", "Senior Legal Woman Dies". This came as a great shock to her many friends who had hoped for her recovery.

Anna Brennan was the youngest and thirteenth child of a family that has spanned more than a century of Australian history and produced lawyers, journalists, public servants and parliamentarians of distinction. Anna was the first Australian-born woman to graduate in law at the University of Melbourne, and last year she completed fifty years in practice as a lawyer. She was a foundation member of the Lyceum Club (now fifty years old), the Newman Society (for University men and women), the Catholic Women's Social Guild, (having helped to draw up its first constitution) and St. Joan's Alliance in Australia. Undoubtedly she was one in heart and mind with that gallant band of women who, on the other side of the world, were struggling for the franchise and founding St. Joan's Alliance when she was emerging as a lawyer. She was always a strong advocate of the rights and responsibilities of women. Some in this community well remember her—a tiny figure—addressing a vast assembly of women in the Cathedral Hall in 1934, at the time when the World Eucharistic Congress was being held in Melbourne. She had been chosen as the speaker to give the woman's point of view on this unique occasion. In the 1940s, she was selected by the National Council of Women to go to Canberra to present the women's case before a parliamentary commission, whose findings eventually led to the desired revision of the law governing the

nationality of married women. Many people will recollect hearing Anna Brennan, a few years ago, skilfully debate over the air against another woman lawyer, the question of divorce.

St. Joan's Alliance, its aims, its work, its patron saint, were very dear to Anna Brennan. Having joined the Alliance while in London, she attended the inaugural meeting of the Australian foundation, which was held in Melbourne on March 25th, 1936. She was president of the Victoria section for twenty-one years (1938-45; 1948-62). Members can recall many evidences of her wise judgment, her sympathetic yet efficient handling of a difficult situation, her alert-mindedness and penetrating insight, her nimble wit and fluency of expression, her deep human interest and her pride in her Catholic faith. Few who heard it will forget her scholarly and stirring address at the Alliance meeting celebrating the 500th anniversary of the rehabilitation of St. Joan of Arc. Those who knew her well will miss also her short outbursts of fiery impatience when confronted with injustice, or sham or slovenly thinking, or culpable ignorance.

Anna was an avid reader and a discerning critic. She had considerable ability as a writer and as a speaker, and was intensely interested in people and ideas. She had a strong, courageous, independent spirit that defied her age and her increasing physical frailty. The accident which caused her last illness occurred at Melbourne University when she was going to one of the Christian Social Week lectures, a series of lectures and discussions which she attended faithfully every year. It is hard to realise that we will never see her there or at St. Joan's meetings or in church again. Our loss is very great. Her devotion to the Mass, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary was a vital force in her life. Perhaps it is not without significance that it was on the Feast of Our Lady's Maternity that Anna Brennan was gathered up to a higher, wider knowledge and to her reward.

Ave atque vale!  
 St. Joan's Alliance, Melbourne

### INTERNATIONAL NOTES

**Italy.** *Cronache* (September, 1962) publishes a message to Italian women, members of C.I.F. (Centro Italiano Femminile) from their ecclesiastical consultant Monsignor Bentivoglio.

Noting that no places are reserved for women in the Great Basilica where ecclesiastics, notabilities and delegates are soon to meet for the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Monsignor Bentivoglio thinks someone may ask, "Has the Catholic Church forgotten that Mary and the Holy Women were with Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem's Cenacle? Does the Church not know that women form the greater part and, some would say, the most sincere, fervent and active part of Christianity?"

He answers: "Woman is present but is in the *invisible tribune*." With Mary and with St. Joseph, the women are there to invoke the guidance of the Holy Ghost on the work of St. Peter and the Apostles. They are there also in their commemoration in the statues which people the Basilica: St. Veronica displaying the Veil, St. Helena the Cross, the foundresses of the great Orders, heroic witnesses to the Church's victories throughout the centuries; St. Matilda of Canossa upholding the Papal tiara. They are there by their prayers throughout the world.

Throughout the world also women continue to pray that they may be given greater opportunities to serve the Church.

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**Portugal.** A Decree-Law published on September 14th by the Ministers of the Interior and of Health abolishes the licensing of prostitutes and of brothels in Portugal from January 1st, 1963. Since 1949, no new brothels have been licensed under a law of that year, and licensed prostitutes and houses have been abolished in the Portuguese Provinces Overseas for some years.

In the preamble to the new Decree-Law it says that the Abolitionist Movement was started in Portugal by Ricardo Jorge in 1875 and that since 1946 France, Belgium, Rumania, Hungary, Italy and Spain have all suppressed licensed prostitution. It stresses that the reasons usually advanced for regulation, i.e. limitation of public soliciting, the limitation of the number of clandestine brothels and the control of venereal diseases are not found by experience to be valid. It stresses also, that regulation creates a whole field of interests related to prostitution which cannot be repressed by police action, though in Portugal this has not assumed the vast exploitation which it has in certain other countries.

The Decree-Law provides for the education and rehabilitation of young prostitutes. It also states that after January 1st 1963, the furniture of any brothel found to be functioning can be sold at

public auction for the benefit of establishments devoted to the rehabilitation of women and girls, and that all licences and documents concerned with the traffic shall be burnt within twenty days.

\* \* \*

**United Nations.** The Third Committee of the General Assembly has passed the draft Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages. The final vote on the entire text was 80 in favour, none against, with 9 abstentions.

### WOMEN TRAVELLERS' EXHIBITION

On October 12th, Mrs. Joyce Dunsheath the leader of the All Women Himalayan expedition, opened at the Fawcett Library, 27 Wilfred Street, an exhibition of books on and by women travellers and explorers. The occasion marked the centenary of the birth of Mary Kingsley, the bicentenary of the death of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the centenary of the death of Julia Pardoe.

Mary Kingsley's journey through West Africa, made with the object of collecting beetles and fish took her through country hitherto unvisited by Europeans. In order to pay for her travels she learnt to trade in rubber and oil. In her book "Travels in West Africa", she showed herself well ahead of the imperialistic mood of the time and urged a better understanding of the African peoples and on returning to England she lectured on the subject to various learned bodies in this country. Surprisingly, she was no feminist and the Fawcett Library possesses a manuscript of her address opposing woman suffrage in a debate. Declaring that she had the greatest respect for the British Constitution but none for Parliament at that time, she considered that there were already a great deal too many people in our electorate, ready to believe anything that was told them. She was, however, in favour of women taking part in local government. She died at the early age of thirty-eight.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had a wide knowledge of Turkey where she learnt of the practice of inoculation against smallpox, which she introduced into England. She also made further journeys through Europe, Asia and Africa.

Julia Pardoe wrote of Portugal, Turkey and Hungary and according to the Dictionary of National Biography had as great a knowledge of Turkey as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

A great many other women travellers are represented, their journeys taken from every variety of motive—religion, exploration, anthropology, entomology, botany, mountaineering, etc. There are many interesting books dating from the 17th century and the Fawcett Library is to be congratulated on staging such a fascinating exhibition.

P.M.B.



## Women Musicians Then and Now

The change in the status of women in the musical world has come about so gradually that it is quite hard to picture the taboos which restricted them at the turn of the century. It was not so long since music was a pastime, as Jane Austen describes it; a pleasant little interlude after dinner, by the young ladies who had practised their scales and arpeggios with diligence; or maybe a useful cover for a mild flirtation. But music as a profession for women—never!

Yet genius in woman has not lacked recognition down the ages. Queens, saints, actresses have left their mark on history. Catherine the Great, Mary Queen of Scots, the Queen of Sheba; St. Joan of Arc, St. Teresa of Avila (writer too); the Duse, Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry, to pick out a few examples at random. A mixed company indeed, but for whatever they were famous, it was not as musicians. Singers have come to the fore, and the reason is evident; a woman's voice is unique, and there is no substitute for it. But an instrumentalist, and one who was actually taking money for playing—that was another story, and at first it seemed daring and rather shocking. Genius however once more overbore the conventions, and Norman Neruda (later Lady Hallé) achieved a place in the musical world on equal terms with Joachim, and was quickly followed by Elsie Hall and a whole line of women violinists, cellists, viola-players, and even wood-wind.

What meanwhile was happening to the rank and file? I was a little girl in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and I remember being taken by my mother as a treat to a new tea-shop which had been opened by ladies in Bond Street. It was long and narrow and dark, lit only by shaded lamps on the tables, and my mother disapproved. Her disapproval became vocal when we came upon a trio of women tuning up behind a screen. This was the last straw; it was definitely an improper place, and my mother reacted as the respectable British matron: she marched me out. But women players had come to stay, and when they were no longer a novelty they were no longer shocking either, only rather pathetic; forced for the most part to grind away for a pittance, with their artistic dreams lying in shreds around them.

Actresses, like singers, had always been indispensable, and when the Suffrage Movement began its struggle the Actresses' Franchise League came into being, and was joined by the musicians, who were not in a strong enough position to have a League of their own. They were drawn largely from the little bands in restaurants, teachers in schools, and orchestras in country towns. There was by that time one woman's organisation, the Aeolian Ladies Orchestra, conducted by a woman, which I was later privileged to lead. It was quite

busy in London and further afield, but played for pitifully small fees. The band which led the marches to Hyde Park had the well-known Mukle family as its backbone. Between the five sisters they played twelve instruments, and there exists a photograph of Louise Mukle playing the drum, her second instrument—the double bass was her first—and two of her sisters blowing the trumpet and flute with a militant air. The brilliant accompanist, Anne Mukle, a slight indomitable little figure, marched with her bassoon, which looked several sizes too big for her. May Mukle says they took part in all the processions, and she herself, when in New York for a solo concert tour, walked in a procession there, and stirred up enthusiasm among her society hostesses.

During World War I it was under the aegis of the stage that many women were sent to France to give concerts to the troops; Lena Ashwell was the organiser. The parties were so successful in stimulating morale that towards the end they were sent close up to the line, and there, in full evening dress, within sound of the guns, they played in crowded huts and marquees. The enthusiasm was indescribable, and no-one who took part could ever forget those soldier audiences, sometimes the second one crowding in through the windows as the first went reluctantly out by the doors. The eagerness for that hour and a half's transportation from the savagery of the trenches into a world of culture knew no bounds.

When Sir Henry Wood opened the Queen's Hall Orchestra to women he gave them once and for all their chance on equal terms with men. Even so a trace of Victorian prudery lingered; he refused to engage women double-bass players, because he thought it looked 'unladylike', thereby depriving his orchestra of Louise Mukle, one of the finest players in England at that time. Anyone who remembers the revival of the 'Beggars Opera' at Hammersmith in those days will recall the mellow tone and perfect rhythm of her playing. A musician to her finger-tips, she was the backbone of the little orchestra.

Since those early days of struggle women have gone from strength to strength, taking their place on their own merits, and making themselves indispensable in many orchestras, including the B.B.C. A small piece of pioneer work fell to my own lot when, in 1926, the Kendall String Quartet made a successful world tour, the first women's quartet to undertake such an adventure.

Another taboo no longer rears its head, though this has probably little to do with the feminist movement. I remember a man violinist, a fine soloist and leader of one of the London Symphony Orchestras, confiding to me his difficulties. Being a Catholic, he said, was a real problem. With a

family to support he often had to keep quiet about it from the very real fear of losing engagements. That was in the 1930s and is changed now, partly for the sad reason that nobody cares.

Looking back over the years one odd omission strikes one. Where are the women composers and conductors? Ethel Smyth comes to mind at once, but is she the only one? With all the meteor-like brilliance of her personality and the sparkle it gave to everything she did, was her work of lasting value? I am sadly afraid that the answer is no. There is no barrier now, no lack of opportunity, but the genius to seize it does not seem to be forthcoming.

It is left to men, here in England, and all the world over so far as I know, to come to the fore as composers and conductors, and it is hard to find the answer. Perhaps we have to wait for future scientific discovery to account for it by physiological or psychological analysis—perhaps we are only waiting for the woman genius to be born!

Katherine Kendall

### REVIEWS

**Caryll Houselander.** By Maisie Ward. (Stagbooks, Sheed & Ward 12s 6d)

"With her flaming red hair, very white face, and garbed in a Morris-like overall, she might just as well have stepped out of a mediaeval stained-glass window... she wore glasses with very thick lenses... in some ways she looked more like a mediaeval tumbler than a saint... she carried herself with a curious dignity and gravity."

This is how Christine Spender saw Caryll Houselander when they met for the first time at the British Censorship in 1942, saw her inwardly as well as outwardly, for, as we learn from Maisie Ward's admirable biography, Caryll possessed something of the saint, something of the tumbler, too.

Caryll's parents separated when she was a child, her health was never good, her love affair, while it fulfilled her in one sense, ended in tragedy. For a brief period, the "rocking horse" Catholic sought consolation in other faiths before returning in full maturity to the Church.

Caryll Houselander was both artist and writer, but writing was her true vocation. Some of her "rhythms" as she called her poems have a crystalline beauty.

She was not, as Maisie Ward says, "just another writer of spiritual books." She was a mystic, she saw "visions"—the inverted commas are hers. Possibly they were projected out of her subconscious, yet the subconscious may well be equated with the soul, and Caryll's "visions" gave her a new slant on her faith. Her approach to our Lord was through suffering humanity. "The risen Christ said: Do not touch Me... but paradoxically He told us to touch His wounds. It means this, we cannot see

Christ in His glory, but we can see Him and touch Him in man's sufferings."

Caryll Houselander gave herself unsparingly to all who needed help at great cost to herself. In addition, she did much work with disturbed children. Dr. Strauss, the late President of the British Psychological Society who first sent them to her, called her "that divine eccentric" and said "she loved them back to life."

The tumbler in Caryll Houselander often came uppermost. She had a sharp tongue which she could not always curb, and detested "piety." When told not to do anything that would make Our Lady blush, she remarked that she could not see Our Lady doing any of the things in which she delighted, such as blacking her face, sucking two bullseyes at once, and turning somersaults!

She had a special love for the devotion of the Stations of the Cross—perhaps that was why her feet were set in this world on a *via crucis*, the *via crucis* a creative artist suffers when torn away from work. "One single day of writing makes me feel as fit as a flea," she wrote to Christine Spender, "but the very moment I open my door to the merciless inrush of people, I really do nearly collapse—in fact, I did so twice." From a letter written during her last illness, we know how deeply she suffered: "I have never in all my life, for one single week, been free to enjoy the gifts God has given me, they have always been violated, cramped, hurried, scamped, fitted into other people's convenience and never allowed to grow." It was then that she made up her mind to enjoy these gifts, but only a brief spell was left to her, and she died, after great suffering, of cancer.

Caryll Houselander, the "divine eccentric" lives on for us in her books, and we have from Maisie Ward the promise of an anthology of her letters—an anthology we look forward to eagerly, and one which we shall treasure.

P. D. Cummins

**Preparing for Marriage.** By John Marshall. (Darton, Longman & Todd. 5s)

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F.M.S.



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