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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

Saint Bernadette, Pray for Us

By Christine Spender

This year we celebrate the centenary of the visions accorded to St. Bernadette Soubirous in the Grotto of Massabielle, near the River Gave at Lourdes. We are, most of us, familiar with the outlines of the story—its detailed telling is related with great ease and skill in the book* under review. It is the fourth detailed account I have read and I judge it to be the best.

There were eighteen Apparitions altogether, the first one being on Thursday, February 11th 1858, and the last on Friday, July 19th 1858. It is an amazing narrative and yet, looked at after all these years it is impressive how the pattern falls into place. For the message of the Apparitions was first the necessity of personal sanctification for Bernadette, secondly the necessity of prayer and penance for all and finally the confirmation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception declared four years before. The directions of the Lady "to build a chapel" and that priests and people should come in procession were but the underlining of the message of prayer and penance, and prayer for sinners. The finding of the spring and the direction of the Lady to drink the water and wash in it has, of course, deep spiritual significance. Water symbolises purification and renewal throughout the Old and New Testaments and the secondary effects of such renewal would often seem to be bodily healing. So that it is not surprising that when the flow of water from the Massabielle rock had become well established and when the sacred spot had become a power-house of prayer and praise, miracles of healing began to be reported and these miracles have continued ever since. But they are still secondary effects. Anyone who has been to Lourdes will confirm the fact that those who have gone to see a miracle of bodily healing there will come away profoundly moved and profoundly changed, with or without that miracle. It is as though Our Blessed Lord still moves among the crowds collected there, as He once did in Galilee.

This simple unlettered Bernadette, then, while still only a child was favoured with visions of a beautiful Lady who "talked" to her during the eighteen Apparitions at the Grotto. People who saw her in ecstasy at the Grotto say that her features and expression were completely transfigured as she gazed at the Vision, and certainly this Vision transformed her life and was to be the instrument of her sanctification. One day she went out to gather wood near the River Gave with her sister and a school friend; they were stronger than she was and went ahead, and when they came back Bernadette had seen her "beautiful Lady." The Lady told her to return and for Her sake Bernadette was to brave criticism, opposition and ridicule and to answer her detractors and opponents with the courage and inspired common-sense of a St. Joan. She was to walk among crowds with complete detachment and humility and no following, no admirers were ever to turn her head. Her later life makes sad reading, in one sense, for as a Sister of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction at Nevers she was to have an unsympathetic Superior General whose one idea was to humiliate her in case the signal favour of the Visions should, too much exalt her. This heavy cross of misunderstanding was laid on frail shoulders indeed, for Bernadette was to die at the age of thirty-five in great agony, riddled with tuberculosis due to a starved and neglected childhood. (Her family, especially her mother, were loyal and pious, but feckless and poor, and this combined with little knowledge of hygiene did not make for good health in a delicate and asthmatic child.) Either Bernadette had a natural constitution of iron or a will of iron, for her physical endurance was always remarkable and bordered on the miraculous. With great sweetness she conquered her Pyrenean obstinacy and pride and many of the Sisters loved to be near her because they felt they were watching a Saint in the making. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble."

Mother Vazour found it hard to recognise this

* **Saint Bernadette Soubirous, 1844-1879.** By Francis Trochu. Translated by James Joyce, S.J. (Longmans 25s.)

but in the end she had to. She died at Lourdes in sight of the Grotto, invoking Our Lady of Lourdes.

At the Bernadette Museum in Lourdes one may see, among other touching relics, the little black wooden-beaded rosary which Bernadette told as she watched her beautiful Lady. As she slipped the beads through her fingers saying the prayers, the Lady slipped the shining white beads of the Rosary, hung over Her right arm, through Her fingers "not moving her lips." Here is the description of the Lady which Bernadette gave, and which she never varied.

"She was wearing a white dress trailing down to her feet of which only the toes appeared. The dress was gathered very high at the neck by a hem from which hung a white cord. A white veil covered her head and came down over her shoulders and arms almost to the bottom of her dress. On each foot I saw a yellow rose. The sash of the dress was blue and hung down below her knees. The chain of the rosary was yellow; the beads white, big and widely spaced. The girl was alive, very young and surrounded with light."

This beautiful Lady taught Bernadette to make the sign of the cross in a way which profoundly affected her contemporaries. Bernadette used to bow and to smile during the ecstasies in a manner which moved the spectators to tears. When, at last, the Lady told Bernadette Her name—"I am the Immaculate Conception"—She clasped her hands and raised her eyes to Heaven with a smile which Bernadette was to repeat for the sake of an unbeliever.

"After long questioning about the Apparitions I said to her: 'Lastly, how did she smile, this beautiful Lady?'"

"Oh, sir, you would have to come from Heaven to reproduce that smile . . ." Then she went on: 'As you are a sinner, I shall repeat the Blessed Virgin's smile for you.' The child got up very slowly, joined her hands and gave a heavenly smile such as I have never seen on any mortal lips. Her face lit up with a dazzling radiance of light. She smiled again with her eyes raised heavenwards. I remained motionless before her, convinced that I had seen the Virgin's smile on the face of the visionary."

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

May I remind you that subscriptions for 1958 fell due on January 1st—£1 which includes *The Catholic Citizen*. It would be a great help if you would send your subscriptions as soon as possible as our expenses are heavy.

Noreen K. Carr

EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS CONVENTION

A question about the non-ratification of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women by Her Majesty's Government at the United Nations was asked in the House of Commons by both Miss Elaine Burton and Mrs. Emmet on January 23rd. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Profumo, replied that the Governments of all the territories concerned had been asked if they were willing to accept the Convention. He pointed out that it was necessary for every territory for whose international relations the United Kingdom was responsible to accept the Convention before Her Majesty's Government could ratify it. Miss Burton said that a year ago we were told that these enquiries were being made and asked if the Under-Secretary could give any idea at all how long these matters would take. Mr. Profumo replied that he could not. He gave the following summary of replies already received

(1) **11 territories could accept the Convention.** Montserrat, Grenada, St. Kitts, Virgin Islands, British Honduras, Tanganyika, Gambia, Sarawak, Mauritius, Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

(2) **13 territories could accept Articles 1 and 2 but not Article 3.** Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malta, Bermuda, Dominica, St. Vincent, Barbados, St. Lucia, British Guiana, Seychelles, Falkland Islands, Antigua. Two common reasons are the absence of equal pay in the Civil Service and the non-eligibility of women for jury service. There are also in some territories marriage bars or other measures of discrimination in branches of the Civil Service.

(3) **7 territories could not accept Article 1 (or 1 and 2).** In Aden, Uganda and Fiji there are at present no votes for women, and in Nigeria no votes for women in the Northern Region. Sierra Leone has different qualifications for male and female electors. In Kenya there is no vote for Arab women and different qualifications for African women and men.

(4) **2 territories (Zanzibar and Bahamas) could not accept any Article.**

(5) **6 territories (Tonga, North Borneo, New Hebrides, Western Pacific, Somaliland, St. Helena) have not sufficiently developed institutions for the Convention to apply to them although there is no actual legal objection.**

I have not yet had replies from the remaining territories.

Below are the relevant Articles for the Convention.

ARTICLE I. Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men without any discrimination.

ARTICLE II. Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men without any discrimination.

ARTICLE III. Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions established by national law on equal terms with men without any discrimination.

Notes and Comments

A Deputation of representatives of twenty societies, organised by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, was received by the Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, on January 30th. The deputation, which was introduced by Mrs. Corbett Ashby, spent an hour with the Home Secretary. The speakers, Mrs. Bligh, the Dowager Lady Nunburnholme, Miss D. O. G. Peto, Dame Rachel Crowley Thornhill and Miss Chave Collisson put forward the views of the deputation on the Wolfenden Report and its Recommendations, views which are familiar to readers of recent issues of *The Catholic Citizen*. The Alliance was represented by the chairman and the hon. secretary. Mr. Butler promised that the views expressed would be taken into account by the Government in considering the Wolfenden Committee's recommendations. In view of possible legislation it is of vital importance now for members to approach their M.P.s, and help to form public opinion on the injustice of some of the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report. Members will shortly receive a letter on the subject.

The value of this is illustrated by the following letter which has been received from one of the Merseyside M.P.s, in reply to the resolution on the Wolfenden Report passed by the Merseyside Branch of the Alliance and sent to all the local M.P.s by the chairman Mrs. McCann.

Thank you for your letter with the copy of the Resolution, which I am pleased to receive. It may interest you and your members to know that your letter was the first and so far only letter received by me, on any aspect of the Wolfenden Report. Without such correspondence it becomes most difficult for Members to know the state of public opinion.

The Life Peerages Bill passed its Third Reading, without opposition, in the House of Lords on January 31st. The Lord Chancellor, Viscount Kilmuir, stated that the choice of life peers must rest with the Prime Minister, but he "thought that in regard to the problem of recruitment for the Opposition, except in most exceptional cases, the suggestions of the Leader of the Opposition would be accepted."

Two girl cadets aged between seventeen and nineteen are to be added to the Buckinghamshire Police Force. During the first year they will do clerical work, telephone and teleprinter, and will later go on the beat with policewomen. The chief constable said he hoped the girls would afterwards come into the police force; he found that ninety per cent. of the boy cadets came back as policemen.

The Co-operative Societies have agreed with the Unions to make an immediate increase in unequal pay for ten thousand laundry workers; 12s. a week for men and 6s. 6d. for women. The weekly provincial rates are now £8 6s. 0d. for men and £5 15s. 9d. for women.

The increasing difficulty of procuring the appointment of women to headships of schools is illustrated in the Bulletin of the Women's Freedom League. In schools for boys and girls of eight to eleven years, only seven hundred and seventy five women hold headships compared with two thousand eight hundred and ninety one men; in the Secondary Modern Schools sixty-four women as against one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two men are Head Teachers; one out of three hundred and eighty-one mixed Grammar Schools and two out of twenty-one Comprehensive Schools have a Head Mistress.

Congratulations to Mrs Margaret Shuldham (née O'Connor) on the birth of her third child, Timothy Edward.

The fifteenth Council Meeting of St. Joan's International Alliance will be held in Brussels on September 27th and 28th. Brussels has been chosen to enable delegates to visit the Universal International Exhibition, the first of its kind to be held since the war. The theme of the Exhibition is MAN. There will be a Vatican Pavilion named *Civitas Dei*. In the Congo Section there will be a contingent of Africans from the Missions with some of whom, members of the Alliance will hope to make friends.

Members of the Alliance who wish to attend the Council Meeting of St. Joan's International should notify the Hon. secretary at 8B Dryden Chambers Street, 119 Oxford Street, London W.1, without delay.

ANNUAL MEETING

We remind members of the Forty-Seventh Annual Meeting of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance on Saturday, March 15th, at 2.30, Mrs. Shattock, M.D., D.P.M., presiding. It will be held at 27 Wilfred Street, off Palace Street, S.W.1, next door to the Central Catholic Library. Among the speakers will be Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, D.B.E., Miss Noreen Carr, Mrs. Jessie Power and Miss H. R. Walmesley, M.A.

Tea 1s. 6d. will be available after the meeting.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE

AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society

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Abolition in Japan

The Law for the Prevention of Prostitution and the rehabilitation of Prostitutes in Japan was passed by the Diet in May 1956 after a struggle which had been carried on for some eighty-four years.

The historical background of this long struggle, and some of the consequences which have followed the passing of the new law, have been outlined by Lady Garrett in a report which she recently presented to the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene following a visit to Japan.

Highlights of Japan's struggle to abolish prostitution during these eighty-four years were: the liberation of licensed prostitutes in the Gumma Prefecture in 1892; the visit made by a member of the Executive Committee of the A.M.S.H. in 1921, which gave much encouragement to social service organizations that were working hard for the liberation movement; and the unremitting efforts of more than forty women's organizations. When the first Government-proposed Bill (1948) was shelved, these organizations, including the W.C.T.U., Y.W.C.A., League of Women Voters, women's groups in political parties, etc., joined in forming a Committee for the Promotion of the Enactment of the Prevention of Prostitution Law. The law of 1956 was a great step forward, but it was not to be expected that the evils which had grown up in the absence of such legislation could be swept away overnight, nor that the vast numbers of people who had an interest in perpetuating the trade in women would abandon their activities without attempting to oppose the implementation of the new measures. According to statistical data (compiled by the Women's and Minors' Bureau of the Ministry of Labour), immediately before the passing of the Bill there were in Japan 789 red-light districts, with 16,208 operators and 59,298 prostitutes. When Geisha quarters and quasi-red-light districts are added to the above, the number of operators was estimated at 39,067, and that of prostitutes 121,885. The total number of women involved was estimated at 150,000.

Powerful interests will therefore be at work to prevent, if they can, the effective implementation of the provisions of the new Bill, which is the most far-reaching of all the measures which have hitherto been taken in Japan to bring to an end the exploitation of women and girls. The present state of the struggle to end this evil has been set out with admirable clarity in a booklet of thirty pages* by Hiromi Nagato, chief of the General Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Justice, Tokyo, who took a leading part in framing the law of May 1956.

He opens Section I, "Prostitution in Japan and Countermeasures," with the words: "The so-called licensed prostitution does not exist in Japan now." He explains that a memorandum from General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, dated January 21st, 1946, abolished the system of prostitution hitherto tolerated in certain districts. This was followed by an Imperial Ordinance concerning the "Punishment of Persons who make a Female Prostitute," on January 25th, 1947; but this ordinance, and the pertinent provisions of the Labour Standards Law, Employment Security Law, Child Welfare Law, etc., still left loopholes which enabled the traffic in women to continue. It became clear that the mere enactment of penal provisions for prostitutes and brothel keepers, etc., was not sufficient; that steps for the protection and rehabilitation of prostitutes must be taken at the same time. Hence the Prostitution Prevention Law of May 24th, 1956. This aims to: (1.) Punish the acts of promoting prostitution, that is, procurement, keeping brothels, receiving or furnishing funds, etc.; (2.) Prevent prostitution by taking measures that will help in the protection and rehabilitation of females terrorized into becoming prostitutes. In principle, prostitutes are not to be punished but to be assisted to change their mode of life.

* **Prevention of Prostitution and Rehabilitation of Prostitutes in Japan.**

Protective institutions, "Women's Homes," have been set up where prostitutes may go while they are making the adjustment between their old life and the new. There they will be given vocational guidance and eventually assistance in taking a proper place in society.

The law came into force on April 1st, 1957, but the penalties relating to (1.) above will not be enforced until April 1st, 1958. It is hoped that by that time the measures for protection and rehabilitation of women will be working effectively and that brothel keepers will have abandoned their trade.

Section II of the booklet is entitled, "Can Prostitution be Prevented?" Here Mr. Nagato sets out some of the social circumstances which encourage the spread of prostitution, and the anti-social ideas which prevent its being recognized for the evil it is.

He is clearly conscious of the difficulties ahead. He knows that because of their easy living, prostitutes often have an antipathy to work and are liable to reject help. He asks for the co-operation of other women and hopes that they will use their influence to encourage prostitutes to abandon their way of life.

As is so often the case, however, he appears reluctant to face the fact that without the demand for their services the supply of prostitutes would soon cease to exist, and that this demand will not be reduced while all the attention, in measures for combating prostitution, is focused on the woman's part. One would have hoped that Mr. Nagato, who is otherwise so forward-looking, and who shows such a sympathy and understanding of the prostitute's problems, had also indicated his awareness of the equal culpability of the men who seek out prostitutes.

One also looks in vain for some indication that the necessity of raising the moral standards of both sexes has been recognized in Japan, and that the ideal of chastity is being put forward as one to which both sexes should aspire.

Some passages in Lady Garrett's report indicate that this aspect of the problem of dealing with prostitution is receiving scant attention. She discussed these points, and the necessity for the education of men, as well as women, in their social responsibilities, with consultants in the Japanese Ministry of Education. The novelty to them of such ideas, and their lack of sympathy for them, is scarcely reassuring.

The last part of Mr. Nagato's report summarises all the numerous laws and ordinances existing in Japan in relation to prostitution. The dates of these various measures indicate how long the problem has been recognized. The principal items in this list are of course the Prostitution Prevention

Law, May 1956, and the Imperial Ordinance of January 1947, above-mentioned, together with a By-Law for the Control of Prostitution, May 1949.

These are, however, by no means the only items of legislation which have relevance in Japan's battle to eliminate regulated prostitution. Extracts are quoted from the following laws which show that the campaign has long engaged public attention and, indeed, has been proceeding on a much wider front than might be realised if only the above-mentioned principal items of legislation are taken into account. The following Laws all contain some measures which attempted to deal with various aspects of prostitution: The Penal Code, 1907; the Civil Code, 1896; the Labour Standards Law, 1947; the Ordinance Relating to Labour Standards for Women and Minors, 1954; the Employment Security Law, 1947; the Child Welfare Law, 1947; the Venereal Diseases Law, 1948; the "Fuzoku" Business Law, 1948; the Minor Offences Law, 1948; the "Ryokan" (Hotel) Business Law, 1948; the Road Traffic Control Law, 1947; and the Order for the Enforcement of the Road Traffic Control Law, 1953.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, as Mr. Nagato so succinctly points out on page four of his report: "In Japan the long-awaited-for Prostitution Prevention Law has at last come into the world. However, it depends upon how the law will be enforced. And the work is the whole nation's."

Margaret C. Clarke

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen," 15th February, 1933

It must be remembered that unemployed insurance is not a voluntary system, every worker receiving less in wages than a certain sum is compelled to insure against unemployment. A woman pays a little less than a man, but the man receives a great deal more in proportion than a woman.

Unemployment Insurance being an integral part of the wage system of the country, it is time that all women workers should make certain the country is not cheating them.

The Open Door Council, in their admirable Commentary on the proposals to differentiate between men and women, points out that the Unemployment Insurance Scheme can be used either as helping to raise the present low status of the woman earner, or as a gigantic engine for standardising her position as a badly-paid worker. The lower benefits and lower contributions of the woman worker encourage the employer, the male worker, the Employment Exchange Official, and even the woman herself, to think that the less well-paid job is "suitable employment" for her, and are thus an important factor in preventing the woman improving her status and insisting on better pay.—
L. de Alberti in "Unemployment Insurance."

We ask the prayers of our readers for Mrs. Graham, a loyal member of the Merseyside Branch of the Alliance who died on December 12th last. R.I.P.

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

The Overseas Service Bill had its Second Reading on January 21st. Miss Joan Vickers raised the question of the criteria for joining the new Special List of officers to be seconded to Overseas Governments. This list would apply, in the first place, to the Overseas Officers in the Federal and Regional Governments of Nigeria but might later be extended by agreement to other territories. Miss Vickers asked were women to be allowed to join the Special List? Were Africans, Malaysians and Indians permitted to do so? As far as she knew, women could only get a certain way in the Service. They could become administrative assistants but she had never known a woman to be a district officer. What would be the position of women when they married? At present, they must resign and could only re-enter the Service on a temporary basis, thus losing their pension rights. Mr. Lennox-Boyd, in replying, said that all pensionable overseas officers would be eligible to apply and this most certainly included women. But it did not include local officers—Nigerian officers. The scheme was not really needed for local officers. But any officer for any British Dominion, who was a member of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service would be eligible to apply. No reply was given on the question of the married women and their pension rights.

On January 28th, Mr. Hornby asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost to the Inland Revenue in the current financial year if the earned income of married women was assessed for taxation separately from their husband's income. Mr. Simon: "If the earned income of a married woman were taxed as if it were, in all respects, the income of a single person, and the income of the husband were taxed as at present, the loss to the Revenue would be about five million pounds."

On January 29th, in the committee stage of the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands Bill it transpired that while the women of the islands have the same rights of suffrage as the men, in fact, by some local custom, they do not exercise them. Mr. James Callaghan expressed surprise that the Chamber was not full of women Members "making sure that their sex in the islands exercise the rights which have been so bitterly won in this country. Why do the women in these islands not exercise the vote?" Mr. Profumo replied: "That is an embarrassing question for me to try to answer. Quite frankly, I have not the foggiest idea. I must be absolutely honest. I have no idea why the ladies in the Cayman Islands do not do what the law allows them to do. They may have a little more trust in their men folk than have the ladies in this country. There are no lady Members in the Chamber at the moment. The men may

have felt in the past that if their ladyfolk kept to their homes, raising families, and left the menfolk to look after politics, it might be much better for the Colony.

"If the ladies do not exercise their right to vote it will not be the fault of Her Majesty's Government. It is clear that the ladies will have the same rights as their menfolk. As time goes on, and the ladies there remark how successful women suffrage has been in this country, the position may alter."

On the same date, the Minister of Pensions and National Insurance in reply to Mrs. Jeger, said that between 7th June, 1954 and 4th June, 1955, some 6,000 insured women "were certified for National Insurance purposes as due to 'abortion' which is the term used to cover all types of miscarriage."

Mr. Butler replying to Mr. Hastings on January 30th, said he was aware of the difficulty which has caused local authorities to suggest that courts should be enabled to make contribution orders with retrospective effect for children received into or committed to their care, or to approved schools. The matter would be considered when a suitable opportunity for amending legislation occurred. Mrs. Jeger asked whether Mr. Butler would introduce legislation to amend the Married Women's Maintenance Act, 1949, to enable courts to increase the maximum weekly maintenance payments of £5 for wives and 30s. for children in view of the diminished value of the £ sterling. The Home Secretary said he would consider the matter but that "the court must have regard to the means and circumstances of the defendant in fixing the amount of a maintenance order, and at present he had no evidence that orders are commonly made for the maximum amounts allowed by the 1949 Act."

P. M. Brandt

REVIEW

Person to Person. By W. Lawson, S.J. (Longmans 10s. 6d.)

Father Lawson examines interpersonal relationships in family, school, workshop, and the impact of modern industrial expansion on human relationship and integrity. Leader and led, employer and employee, the human values involved must be intervalued before we are acclimatized to the complexity of modern industrialisation and all it entails. This book will assist manager and managed to disentangle their problems in a spirit of Christian co-partnership.

On page 41 and seq. Father Lawson chivalrously, but at some danger to his thesis of full human stature and integrity, examines woman's work apart from work in general. He finds that mankind has profited by the widening of woman's horizons and then suggests work which is most suited to her abilities—a choice best left to the

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Belgium. The Bill relating to the rights and duties of husband and wife was passed by the Senate on November 15th, 1957 by 145 votes to 1 with no abstention. During the debate, Madame Ciselet said: "The proposed law replaces the marital power of the husband by an equality of rights between husband and wife. There is a contradiction between the perpetual minority which the Code Napoléon imposes on wives and the numerous functions which women are called upon to exercise in the modern world. It is that contradiction which we ask you to suppress."—(*Bulletin du Conseil National des Femmes Belges*)

* * *

Ethiopia. Two women have been elected to Parliament, one of whom Madame Snedu Gnebo, is the Vice-President.

* * *

France. Madame Marie Marvingt of Nancy, balloonist and aviation pioneer has just received her twenty-eighth decoration at the age of eighty-two. She is a Chevalier de la Santé Publique, a Gold Medal Officer of the Ministry of Education, holder of the Silver Medal of the Service de Santé de l'Air and of the International Medal of an Assistante de l'Air. Madame Marvingt rides a bicycle when in Paris, and two years ago learned to pilot a helicopter.—(*The World Veteran*)

* * *

Italy. At long last, the shame of state regulated prostitution in Italy has been brought to an end by the passing of the "Merlin Law" by the Chamber of Deputies on January 29th, by 385 votes to 115. This achievement is largely due to the courage and persistent action of Senator Angelina Merlin (Socialist). She first tabled her Bill in 1948, since when she has never ceased, in the face of threats, ridicule and every conceivable delaying tactic, to work for its passage into law.

The law, which will come into force in six months, will end the State licensing of prostitution in Italy and cause the closing of some five hundred and fifty brothels.

St. Joan's Alliance expresses its admiration to Senator Merlin for her fine work in Parliament to remove this reproach from her country and sends her heartfelt congratulations. The Alliance would also pay tribute to Signora de Silvestri whose work for the Bill, more particularly on the technical side, was of inestimable value during the campaign for abolition.

* * *

Malaya. A Malay woman, Han Suyin, writing in *Eastern World* deplores the fact that women in Malaya have not achieved a social or economic status on a par with their importance as voters and citizens, and expresses her fear that the status of women will suffer after Merdeka, since the new

worker! She may prefer "the rough" and "impersonal" and, though "patient and gentle" may reveal "in machinery and in public transport." Does she look "worn before her time"? Then maybe, the conditions at work should be improved, both for her and her male colleagues. Or maybe she does not receive her fair share of equal pay and she has to budget accordingly? These reflections might also be taken into account when Christian justice is invoked and when the relations of employer and employee are considered under its inspiration.

F. Mackenzie Shattock

HERE AND THERE

For the ancient Hebrews there was something very natural about picturing God's Wisdom as a woman and a mother. It is true that women among them had an inferior social position. No queen, as the wife of a king of Israel, ever had much influence in public affairs, except perhaps for the unspeakable Queen Jezebel. Since kings like David and Solomon had so many wives, this is not surprising. But while a king might have many wives, he only had one mother, and the queen mother did have a position of great prestige and influence. The Book of Kings nearly always tells us the name of the king's mother when it announces his accession to the throne; and it describes the scene when Solomon received his mother, Bethsabee, when she came to make a request—he rose from his throne and bowed to her and seated her at his right hand.

And that surely is the great position our Lady occupies, as the most perfect representative of God's Wisdom. She is the Queen Mother of Christ our King, deep in the counsels of God. That, perhaps we can say, is at least partly how her Assumption fits into the designs of grace. As Solomon rose and received his mother, so Christ in his glory stooped down and took up his Mother to sit enthroned beside him. — *'Our Lady' by Edmund Hill O.P. A sermon preached to Dominican Tertiaries on the feast of Our Lady of the Snows. Published in 'The Life of the Spirit.'*

* * *

It is very easy, if you believe deeply in a cause, to give your loyalty to the organisation and to forget the individuals without whom it could not exist. It is easy, because since you are a part of the machinery it is your duty to do your job efficiently, but it is not enough to be efficient. It is amazing how often an extremely efficient organisation fails to be efficacious. It is like a machine that runs very sweetly but isn't connected up, and so cannot achieve anything but its own efficient running. — *B. Hearnden in "The Countrywoman."*

State will be Muslim and subject to religious laws—interpreted by men. The structure of the marriage relationship is polygamous. In polygamy, an essential democracy prevails: a princess, an aristocratic, well-educated and highly respected woman may be cast off for the sake of a young illiterate girl. Women thus cast off are entitled by religious law to *three months* sustenance for themselves and their children, after which payments are not enforceable but depend on the kindness of the husband. The concomitant to having a female population entirely dependent for its financial security upon man's pleasure, is prostitution, now causing serious alarm to the religious authorities in Malaya.

It is suggested that it is beneath the dignity of Malay womanhood to take up such "lowly" professions as those of waitress, dance-girl etc., and that these should be forbidden to them, while prostitution should be punished with fines and imprisonment or both. "To ask", says Mrs. Han Suyin, "what an illiterate woman, cast off by her husband, unable to obtain employment otherwise than by selling herself, and with a family to support, must do other than seek a 'lowly employment' is perhaps being otiose."—*African Women, Commonwealth Section.*

Rhodesia. The new franchise proposals of the Rhodesian Federal Government state that "a wife will be deemed to have the means qualification of her husband, and in polygamous marriages, this will apply only to the first wife."

BOOKS RECEIVED

Universe Books. Burns Oates 2s. 6d. each.

The Gospels. Translated by Father Ronald Knox.
Bernadette of Lourdes. By Frances Parkinson
Keys.

Saints and Ourselves. Personal Studies by Evelyn Waugh, Harman Grisewood, George Scott-Moncrieff, Douglas Hyde, Sir John McEwen, Edward Sackville-West, Robert Speaight, Christopher Dawson, Renée Haynes, Antonia White, Katharine Chorley, D. B. Wyndham Lewis, E. B. Strauss.

St. Bernadette repeated the messages she was given. She was to the last the faithful link between the visitant from God and the sinful world. She could never communicate the wondrous experience that had been hers. But after it, life could never be for her what it was for other girls. Though she gave details of the Lady's visage and dress, no picture or statue ever resembled her. The radiance Bernadette saw is not in the mind of man to comprehend.—*Mary Cavanagh in "The Mercat Cross."*

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