

# Catholic Citizen

Organ of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, (formerly Catholic Women's Suffrage Society), 55 Berners Street, London, W. 1.

Vol. XXII, No. 2.

15th FEBRUARY, 1936.

Price Twopence.

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

## Girl Slaves in Christian Countries

BY EDITH JONES

(Rapporteur for Australian Aborigines, British Commonwealth League)

It is often forgotten by us that Christian marriage and motherhood with its high moral privileges and sanctions in England, has been evolved for us through centuries of social progress, and if in thought we turn back to the stone-age period in England we find marriage and motherhood a question of the appropriation of girl children by the oldest or strongest men of the tribes to be kept as an additional wife or bartered in exchange for other necessities, so that at the age when we say our girls "come of age," stone-age customs had reduced "girls" to advanced middle age, and those of middle age to old hags.

Some stone-age Aryans thousands of years ago migrated to Australia. There, ages of hot sun and out-door life have coloured their skins till they are almost black, except the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet. Isolated from all other peoples their stone-age moral code in relation to women has stood still, and the girl-child from her birth is the property first of the father and afterwards of the husband to keep to lend or to sell. True, in the isolated native state this position has its compensations and even its necessities, and can only be changed if the whole tribe should choose a new social order as some tribes are voluntarily doing in Australia to-day. It is, however, the girl-children of the detribalised Australian Aborigines living on the fringe of white civilisation who call for the instant attention and help of their Christian sisters. Is it too much to ask that any English women who feel stirred by their plight should call upon the women voters throughout Australia to demand from the Government of Australia urgent

attention to these children? Let it be first realised that there are now 20,000 half-castes in Australia and that the number is steadily increasing; further that all half-caste children are illegitimate; there is no marriage in Australia between the white father and the black woman (or black girl-mother).

To illustrate the position we shall cite three recent happenings relating to detribalised aboriginal girl-children.

1. Consequent upon the many complaints made by Father Gsell (twenty-five years superintendent of the Catholic mission to the Aborigines of Bathurst Island, North Australia) that girls were traded by Aborigines to the visiting Japanese pearl-divers and trepanners, together with the stories of various travellers of an almost white girl child living under immoral conditions on the coast visited by Japanese fishermen, the Federal Government lately sent a police officer to make enquiries. He brought back the child who has been placed in the aboriginal home at Darwin. Father Gsell has stated that at various times he bought off 124 aboriginal girls for about £2 of goods apiece, who would otherwise have been sold to Japanese or other bidders. Once in the mission they are safeguarded and later married to Christian aborigines.

2. A few months ago an aboriginal kidnapped a girl of about twelve years old from a mission station in Federal territory. The mission brought a case against him, but at the Supreme Court at Alice Springs (Central Australia), Judge Wells adjudicated in favour of the kidnapper, who said the child had been promised to him by the parents. The Judge re-

marked that there was no law by which the missionary could claim guardianship, although the mission had fed, clothed and educated the child.

3. The following report appeared in the *West Australian* (16th Sept., 1935):

"Pursued inveterately by an old warrior of her tribe, to whom, at her birth, she had been promised in marriage, a 12 year-old lubra took her chance of death or freedom in an unusual tribal ceremony at the Port Keats mission station recently. The story was told yesterday on the return of the mission lugger *St. Francis* to Darwin.

"At a gathering of natives and while white priests watched helpless against their numbers, the warrior armed himself with 10 killing spears. He paced 30 yards from where the girl stood, then turned and threw each of the spears at her. The girl remained standing in one place, but as the spears hurtled about her head or close to her body, she swerved and swayed so that all 10 spears missed their mark. Thus, escaping death at the warrior's hands, she had wiped out his claim on her.

"The warrior had pursued the lubra for months and always she had raced to the newly-erected mission station for protection. The warrior claimed that the girl had been promised to him in marriage when she was born. On the last occasion he chased the girl into the mission house and sought to force his way in. Mr. Pat Ritchie, a young man from New South Wales, who is giving years of his life in mission service and who is helping to launch the mission at Port Keats, stopped the native who was heavily armed with spears. Ordered to put down his weapons the black did so, but immediately seized a knife from a table. Mr. Ritchie closed with him, eventually taking the knife from him. Further trouble followed and eventually the tribal ceremony was arranged. Although the warrior recognises that he has lost his claim to the girl, her troubles are not yet over, for he is extremely jealous and will not permit her to approach any young black who wants her in marriage."

We would remind members that the 25th Annual Meeting of St. Joan's S.P.A. will take place on Saturday, March 21st, at 3 p.m., at St. Patrick's Club Room, Soho Square. As this will be our Jubilee Annual Meeting we hope everyone who finds it at all possible will make a special effort to attend. Among the speakers will be Miss M. Duffy, Miss Eleanor Fitzgerald, Mrs. Garrard, Miss Terry and Miss Warnecke.

## God-Speed

The Committee and Office workers of St. Joan's Alliance gave an informal dinner at the Minerva Club to Miss Margaret Flynn of Melbourne, prior to her departure for Australia where she is hoping to spread and organise the work of our Alliance.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews, presiding, said that though we knew Miss Flynn was taking back to her country a message of hope, we knew too that she was going with a sword in her hand—that sword of the spirit to which Miss Gabrielle Jeffery had recently referred, and which we must all of us wield from the cradle to the grave. The leader of a Section of the Alliance in any country needed very special qualities—personality, knowledge, inspiration, energy and above all vision. "Such a one we have found in Miss Flynn," said Mrs. Laughton Mathews. She would always be glad that they had been able to work together for the Alliance at Geneva. Remembering those strenuous days she was happy to think of the work of the Alliance in Miss Flynn's hands. "We wish her God-speed and the happiness of good work well done."

Mrs. Laughton Mathews then presented Miss Flynn with a gold medal depicting St. Joan clasping her sword, which had been sent from the French Section.

Replying, Miss Flynn said she was overwhelmed—she felt all she could do was to promise to go forward and try to justify all that had been said of her. St. Joan and the "Little Flower" were surely on our side, and with their help she would do her utmost to gather together the scattered members of the Alliance in Australia and make a Society worthy of the Mother Society in England. She had been more than delighted to find in St. Joan's Alliance a band of such active Catholic women and it had been a great joy to her to meet them all. She could say that, in the early history of Australia, when the one Catholic priest had been deported, undoubtedly the Catholic women had played a very large part in keeping the Faith alive.

Miss Margaret Flynn was the only woman member of the Commission appointed by the Government of Victoria to make a survey of the work and cost of that State's Educational Department in 1931. She is a well-known feminist in her own country and was leader of the Australian Delegation to the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu in 1934. For many years Miss Flynn was President of the Victoria Teachers' Union.

## Notes and Comments

We extend a welcome to our new colleagues, and look forward to many years of work together, under the protection of our patron St. Joan, in the great cause of women's emancipation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of our members have received an appeal from the Universities Catholic Education Board to contribute to the maintenance of Catholic chaplains at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The annual report of the Board which accompanies the appeal contains a list of Catholic undergraduates. On examination of this list our members have found, to their astonishment, that it contains not a single Catholic woman, and throughout the report there is no mention of Catholic women undergraduates.

We wonder why women should be expected to contribute to a body which does not recognise their existence. Many of our members have either been to Oxford or Cambridge, or intend to send their daughters there. In the circumstances it would seem less misleading to confine this appeal to Catholic men until such time as the Universities Catholic Education Board takes cognisance of women, which must surely be in the near future.

\* \* \* \* \*

Under the auspices of the Alliance, Miss Christopher St. John will give a lecture on the life and work of Hroswitha on Saturday, February 22nd, at 3-30 p.m., at "Padova," 53 Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead. Miss Barclay Carter will preside. Tickets 2s. and 1s., including tea, obtainable from the office.

Hroswitha was a nun of the Benedictine Abbey of Gandersheim, circa 950-990 A.D., a poet and dramatist, whose plays are the only ones of this period which have been preserved.

We urge members and readers not to miss the opportunity of hearing so expert a lecturer on such a fascinating subject.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two police women for patrol work have been appointed to the Leicester City Police Force. We congratulate our member, Councillor Miss E. C. Fortey, who has persistently and courageously urged this reform on the City Council.

\* \* \* \* \*

We ask the prayers of our readers for the repose of the soul of Miss Roberts, who died recently. R.I.P. Miss Roberts was a member of the W.S.P.U. and a most enthusiastic member of the C.W.S.S. (afterwards St. Joan's Alliance) right up till the time of her death.

St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance mourns the death of King George V. Throughout the twenty-six years of his reign he has given to all his subjects a model of devotion to duty, of kindness, of an exemplary home life. May he rest in peace.

A telegram of sympathy was sent in the name of the Alliance to Her Majesty the Queen and the following reply was received from Sandringham:

"I am commanded to convey to you and all who joined in your message the Queen's sincere thanks for these kind words of sympathy. Private Secretary."

Both as Catholics and feminists we have cause to remember the reign of King George V with gratitude. He was the first ruler since Queen Anne who did not make the Royal Declaration in a form offensive to Catholics, and in 1926 the Catholic Relief Act repealed a large number of legal restrictions upon the liberty of Catholics. The historic struggle of women to obtain political enfranchisement was an outstanding feature of the reign as was the remarkable advance of women in every department of public life which followed the granting of the suffrage.

May the reign of King Edward VIII see a continued advance in the march towards the complete equality of the sexes and the removal of the remaining legal disabilities under which women suffer in this country and throughout the British Commonwealth.

We announce with great joy that "Acção Cultural," the organisation of Catholic feminists in Brazil which was founded in 1933, has decided to come under the banner of St. Joan, and in future the Society will be known as "Alliança Santa Joanna d'Arc."

Thirteen years ago the President, Maria Herminia Lisboa, while on a visit to England, came to our London Office and was so much interested in our work that she subscribed to the *Catholic Citizen* for a number of years, and was later the founder of "Acção Cultural."

The Society has its own paper "A Candeia"—a well-produced quarterly review. If any of our members can understand Portuguese we shall be glad of help in translating this interesting periodical.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE,

AND

Editorial Office of "Catholic Citizen":

55 BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1. Tel. Museum 4181

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

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MISS CHRISTINE SPENDER, *Hon. Editor.*

## Women and the Catholic Church\*

In spite of much that is of interest in this book, one cannot help wishing that the author had produced a serious study instead of a kind of note-book. The note-book style suits some subjects, especially when the author has the ability to strike off sparks of thought in every sentence. Miss Hartley has not this ability—she is inclined to generalise—and in any case the style does not suit the subject. The result is something scrappy and unsatisfying. Such a subject if worked out in a scholarly and methodical manner would take a far longer book than Miss Hartley has given us, even if all her philosophising (very often so irritating as to defeat its own ends) were omitted and readers left to draw their own conclusions.

The earlier chapters are by far the best, especially the chapter on Medieval Guilds. In these chapters Miss Hartley quotes at some length from original sources to show that in England "under the influence of the Catholic Church women had a position of social and economic equality with men"—and very interesting reading they make. By studying contemporary pictures and illuminations she has been able to refute some false ideas of women's position and education in medieval and earlier times. This is one of the most valuable pieces of observation in the book. Her quotations from the early Fathers show a side of their thought too little dwelt upon. "Their gallant fight to persuade a sceptical, reluctant, hostile, pagan world to adopt the same moral and mental standards for women as for men has been too often forgotten or ignored."

\* *Women and the Catholic Church, To-day and Yesterday.* By Olga Hartley. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 5s.)

There is, presumably, more difficulty in dealing with the "post-reformation" period. At any rate this part of the book goes to pieces, the generalisations become wilder and have no bearing on the subject in hand. E.g.: "It isn't only Capital that practises usury. There is a usury of Labour too." Moreover one feels that sometimes the emphasis is put in the wrong place in order to force the argument. This is one of the faults of a too-great brevity, not so much in argument as in information and a balancing of events and characters. It is no use forcing people's hands and it is as well we should not blind ourselves to the fact that a Divine Church has imperfect children who do not always practice or even understand her message perfectly.

On page 237 there is a gross misrepresentation of the aims of the feminist movement and we challenge Miss Hartley to prove her statements. Miss Hartley should in fairness have given the subject a little more thought and study before writing such a paragraph.

One thing emerges incontrovertibly from this book and we may be grateful to Miss Hartley for its re-assertion, and that is the insistence of the Catholic Church "upon the absolutely equal individual responsibility for women with men." To quote Miss Hartley: "The Christian virtues of meekness, humility, chastity, were virtues hitherto exacted only from women; the new religion set them up as an ideal for men. The doctrine that a woman's only mission in the world, her only value to humanity, was as wife and mother was most definitely repudiated (I Corinthians vii, 34 and 38). The old idea that marriage was woman's only reason for existence was swept aside. The

foundations of the Christian Church were laid on the individual relation of the human soul to God, 'there is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female.'" In fact the Church gave back to women their own souls.

St. Paul's great postulate, the postulate of the Catholic Church, has reverberated, now dimly, now loudly, down the ages. The message will continue to work like yeast in the dough until the whole is leavened.

CHRISTINE SPENDER.

## International Notes

The *World's Children* reports an interesting address on "The African Child under Native Law" given by Mr. Julius Lewin, advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa, at a Meeting of the Save the Children Fund's Child Protection Committee. Mr. Lewin recalled the Victorian doctrine which was a characteristic part of British colonial policy, that native law was to be recognised only in so far as it was not repugnant to the principles of civilisation and justice, and he said that some recent cases, notably from Kenya, had encouraged his belief that what was needed was less native law and more British justice. The welfare of African children could hardly be considered apart from the position of their parents, who often persisted in practising old customs detrimental to their own health and especially degrading to the status of women. Mr. Lewin concluded with a plea for a wider interest in African affairs and said that we must be careful not to feel that the welfare of the native African is the closed province of a small circle of experts.

The current number of the *Medical Missionary* (U.S.A.), the quarterly organ of the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, quotes the following from *Die Katholischen Missionen*.

By an agreement between the Colonial government and the *Aide Medicale Aux Missions*, the Catholic mission doctors working in the Congo will become colonial officials. According to their contract with the colonial government (for a period of two, five, twelve or more years) they receive a steady salary, increasing in the course of years of service, they are entitled to a regular vacation at home, and when they grow old are eligible for a pension. Their twofold task consists in rendering service to the missions and to the districts designated by the government. In carrying out the latter they are under the direct supervision of the government which, on its part,

makes the arrangements and supplies the remedies. As servants of the missions, they must work in the hospitals, child welfare centres, public health stations, and treat all natives, teachers, and missionaries free. The chief centre is their own home where they should be assisted by a nurse and a native staff. They should also conduct a native training school for nurses, one for men and another for women. These native nurses will be afterwards employed in different parts of the district.

It will be remembered that the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries was founded on the inspiration of the late Dr. Agnes McClaren, a former member of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society.

S. A. B.

In an article on foreign missions, *Frauenland* (Germany) states that there are now over 30,000 Catholic nuns at work in the various countries of Asia and Africa. This is a splendid total, but the writer goes on to point out that the true aim of missions should be to develop native vocations both to the priesthood for men and to the full religious life for women. She then refers to Uganda as being the mission centre where the ideal of native sisterhoods is being best realised, as here they are already at work in a number of stations in every form of missionary enterprise. The reference is clearly to Mother Kevin's great achievement in that line with no less than 54 professed black Sisters and nearly 100 more in the native novitiate at Nkokonjeru.

V. M. C.

With January our brave contemporary *l'Action Féminine* of Luxembourg has made a welcome re-appearance. In a characteristic leading article Madame Schleimer-Kill once more affirms the determination of the feminists of Luxembourg to carry on their work, independent of all parties, and to continue under the guidance of women to work for women—in spite of the bitter disappointment of the last elections—until the task to which they have put their hand is accomplished for the good of each and all.

From Peru we have received a copy of *Universal*, an illustrated monthly review for women, edited by Señora Elisa Rodriguez Parra de Garcia Rosell. This contains an article by a Dr. Alfredo Palacios on the subject of Votes for Women in Argentina. It recalls the past to read the well-worn arguments, here clothed in stately Spanish, in support of the demand. Dr. Palacios cleverly refutes the bugbear of the catastrophes which the granting of

Votes to Women were supposed to bring inevitably in its train. It seems as though the women of each country have to fight a separate battle. The fact that women have the franchise in other lands without bringing about its ruin seems to carry no weight in those where they are still without the vote. Dr. Palacios, however, ends on a hopeful note, for he expresses the belief that the reform in Argentina will be granted this year.

E. F. G.

Reviews

**Magdalena.** By Helen Douglas Irvine. (Cassells, 7s. 6d.)

Those who remember Miss Helen Douglas Irvine's essays in the "New Witness" and elsewhere will be surprised to find her presented as a "new writer," but indeed they will hardly have expected the masterpiece of strength and beauty she has produced in *Magdalena*. The essays were pre-eminently those of a stylist. Here style has attained that transparency when it is no longer noticed—one notices only the vividness of scene, the vitality of character, the absorbing interest, the profound Catholic spirituality that irradiates the whole book. An Englishwoman travelling in South America hears what seems an unsavoury story of seduction, perversion and murder, (a husband exercising his legal right of punishing infidelity even by death), but the truth as it gradually unfolds reveals instead generosity and heroic sanctity, triumphant in spite of all. In her handling of such difficult themes the author shows herself "the classic artist"—Rebecca West's description of Willa Cather—and *Magdalena* has many affinities with *Death Comes to the Archbishop*.

Miss Douglas Irvine is a member and one-time Chairman of St. Joan's Alliance.

B. B. C.

**The Women of Early Christianity.** By Lina Eckenstein. (The Faith Press, 6s.)

It cannot be denied that this book is rather disappointing. It is well produced and well-written and it must have cost many hours of research, but it demands an extensive knowledge of Church History not always possessed by ordinary lay-folk. Fact and legend are mingled in such a manner as to make it difficult to distinguish one from the other, and, since the book is not written from a Catholic point of view it is not always very easy to disentangle orthodox and heretical figures.

However, the author herself admits that she has written in full recognition of the fact that "there must of necessity be differences of opinion regarding the proportion of truth and fiction in these stories of early Christianity." The book contains a great deal that is of the utmost interest to feminists, and if it aims at being a stimulus to further study, it fulfils its purpose. There is a bibliography and index and several very good photogravures.

C. S.

**Her Soul to Keep.** By Ethel Cook Eliot. (Sheed & Ward, 7s. 6d.)

This novel by a Catholic author has already we are told, attained much popularity in America. It deals with an ever real problem—how can the unmarried mother be helped best to work out her salvation. The heroine, Lucia, a young Catholic widow of deep spirituality, faces the problem which has arisen in her own home through a much loved adopted daughter, and solves it in what is, after all, a truly Christian manner. She resolves to meet the situation squarely by having both mother and child remain in her home in the companionship of herself and her children. How she scores off her circle of young college friends who think it fine to profess pagan views on morality but are completely shocked when faced with a concrete case, is amusingly told. They one and all entreat her to adopt the conventional course of sending the girl away.

Her experiment ends successfully, foreshadowing the happy marriage of the unfortunate girl and Lucia's own re-marriage, a conclusion that fits in rather too easily to seem convincing.

Feminists should be grateful to the author for suggesting by her treatment of the theme that women need no more necessarily be hurried into institutions for their reclamation than their guilty partners.

G. V. J.

**Medieval Socialism.** By Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 2s. 6d.)

Though Socialism in its narrower sense was non-existent in the Middle Ages, yet then as now the problem of property in all its aspects was ever-present and ever-pressing. It exercised some of the best minds of the time and influenced the march of events to no inconsiderable degree. Famous rebels and heretics jostle saints and doctors of the Church in this most interesting book by the late Father Bede Jarrett, and to all comers to the controversy he metes out a most admirable and unusual im-

partiality. The references to women are scanty, but, as always with Father Bede Jarrett, they are sympathetic and illuminating. He summarises for us "several most interesting and refreshing chapters on the education of women" from the "De Recuperatione Sancte Terre" of Pierre du Bois, a social reformer of the reign of Edward I. This early and doughty feminist wished to see the teaching of girls taken out of the hands of nuns and entrusted to laywomen, and he deplored the narrowness of the curriculum in girls' schools and their concentration on the cultivation of the domestic arts and crafts to the exclusion of the cultivation of the intellect. He also pleaded for greater freedom for women in everyday life. Another great social reformer quoted, St. Antonino of Florence, strongly advocated the employment of women in all hospitals, but naturally especially in those for the benefit of members of their own sex.

N. S. P.

BOOKS RECEIVED

**In Darkest London.** By Mrs. Cecil Chesterton. (Stanley Paul, 1s.)

**Prayers to English Martyrs.** (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1s. and 1s. 6d.)

**O Women! What You Could Be . . .** By G. Joannes. (Browne & Nolan 2s. 6d.)

**Progress Through Mental Prayer.** By Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., M.A. (Sheed & Ward, 7s. 6d.)

**Economic Control. The Experiment of Belgium.** By Charles Roger. (Catholic Social Guild, 1s.)

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. A. Stewart Mason, B.A., "Brinsworth," Grosvenor Road, Birkenhead.

We ask the prayers of readers for the repose of the soul of Mr. Augustine Quinn, father of our vice-chairman, Mrs. McCann, who died recently. R.I.P.

HON. TREASURER'S NOTE

May I remind members of the great assistance they can render the Alliance by paying their subscriptions which are now due, promptly. Our best thanks to those who have already done so.

Members are asked to send garments, etc., for our Jumble Sale to be held in Camden Town on Saturday, February 29th. Would volunteers for selling kindly send in their names to Miss Barry at the office?

P. M. BRANDT.

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