

Arm Chair with the Editor

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

Are church services losing their attraction for the people, and if so, what is the cause and what can be done to restore them to their former position? The answer to this question is not to be found by comparing the attendance at services with what it used to be some years ago. Probably the number of people who attend church services, including in that term all religious services, with more or less regularity, is as great as it ever was, perhaps greater. But there has been a great increase in the population, and it is not to be denied that the non-churchgoing element is larger than it used to be. This is especially true of the cities, and as the urban population is increasing more rapidly than the rural, this means that on the whole there are many more people, who do not go to church than was the case, say, half a century ago. In some statistics published not long ago it was shown that the Roman Catholic congregations in New York were more than holding their own numerically, but it was admitted in the comments upon the figures that there was an increasing number of persons of Roman Catholic parentage, who had dropped out of the congregations. The same was stated to be true, even to a greater extent, of the Jewish people of that city. Outside of these two organizations there is an increasing number of people called Protestants by courtesy, but who, so far as attendance at any kind of religious services, might as well be called heathen. In the city of Victoria and vicinity there is a population of about 40,000, perhaps more. It will hardly be claimed that the seating capacity of all the places of worship within the same limits exceeds 10,000, and even if we supposed they were all filled twice daily on Sunday and by different people at each service, it is very evident that the great majority of the people of Victoria are at best very irregular attendants at church services. In this respect the city is probably not specially different from other cities. The fact is that, while there seems to be ample accommodation for all the people who wish to go to religious services of some kind, if every one should adopt the church-going habit at least once a Sunday the number of churches in this city would have to be doubled.

A noted player was once asked by an equally noted clergyman why the theatres were full and the churches very often almost empty. The answer was: "We actors speak fiction as though it were truth; you preachers speak the truth as though it were fiction." The churches are overwhelmed with a sense of their own responsibility. They are handicapped by a burden of tradition. They are trammelled by formality. They seek to supplant human reason by the voice of authority. There are tens of thousands of men, who only think of God and Jesus Christ when they want to be emphatic in their language and then they only think of the words, not of the Being to whom those names have been applied. The use of these expletives is in many cases unconscious. In one of his published lectures, Col. Ingersoll, arguing for Atheism, said: "God knows that I," and so on. Now, one not infrequently hears church services among all denominations conducted with as little apparent thought of what is really signified thereby as Col. Ingersoll gave to his expletive or the ordinary profane swearer does to the actual significance of his language. In too many cases the services are only superficial performances, conducted by men in a purely formal way for the supposed benefit of people who are paying only a perfunctory attention. The wonder is not that more people do not attend services under such circumstances, but that so many do. Today the cry of mankind is as much: "What shall I do to be saved?" as it ever was. Most reverend, very reverend and just ordinary reverend good gentlemen, do not make any mistake on that point! The need of the salvation felt today is in no sense different from the need felt by the people when Jesus was on earth or when the Apostles were preaching the Gospel. It is not a salvation to take effect at some indefinite date in the future from undefined and undefinable perils. When the gaoler put his famous question to Paul and Silas he was not thinking of anything but the earthquake that was shaking the walls of the prison, and if Paul and Silas were honest in their answer when they said "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house," they must have meant a present and immediate salvation. Humanity needs such a salvation today. The crowded slums of the cities need it; the business world needs it; the masses of the people in the rural districts need it; all humanity—starved spiritually, as it is, missing the vital force which is powerful enough to make the world the abode of health and happiness, needs it. The people have asked for the bread of spiritual life and the churches have given it the stone of formal creeds and reiterated forms of expression. The great majority of the people do not find in church services what they want. Hence they seek a substitute somewhere else. If no way of salvation is shown them, they will seek amusement instead. Consequently the theatres are thronged and the churches are empty. If the religion of Jesus Christ is anything at all it is a real thing. It does not consist in an imaginary salvation from imaginary perils. If the story of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles is true, Christianity meant the acquirement through faith of a new power. By what were the sick healed? By what were the eyes of the blind opened? By what were the dead raised? These questions are not directed to men who say the sick were not healed; the eyes of the blind were not opened; the dead were not raised; but to those persons

who profess to hold that these things were true; who preach that these were "the signs which follow them that believe." The answer will be, if an answer is given at all, that these things were done by faith. Then if we ask why such things are not now done, we will be told that the age of miracles is passed. But may it not be asked in reply: When did that age of miracles pass; why did it pass; and what substitute is there for it? Is it not the truth that faith and all its potentialities are as effectual as ever, but that the days of the men who could exercise it, or at least who do exercise it, have passed, so far as the recognized church organizations are concerned? Some may say that this is an argument for faith cure and other things that scientific men deny as heretical outgrowths of ignorance, and orthodox people denounce as anathema. Let this be as it may, one might perhaps be justified in replying that those who believe in faith cure are in very good company. They would find Peter and Paul congenial spirits, and they would not be reproved by The Master. Again, some may say that physical science is explaining all these things. In a recent book it is argued that all matter is in a state of vibration and that thought is able to influence those vibrations. Perhaps this is true; possibly it is true. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Science—with a capital S—has gone along as far in nineteen centuries as a few poor Galilean fishermen had advanced in the days when Imperial Rome had risen above the ruins of the Republic. If man is made in the image of his Creator it is reasonable to suppose that he possesses faculties which will make him supreme over material creation, if he will only exercise them.

This is the sort of religion that will fill the churches. It was the sort of religion that swept the Roman Empire like a whirlwind—not a religion of ritual, although ritual is an aid to it—not a religion of creeds, although a creed may be the rational outgrowth of it; but a religion that will help human nature in the affairs of everyday life and fit men to face the future, whether in this world or another, absolutely without fear.

THE NILE

The career of Napoleon divides itself in a general way into several periods. After his successful operations against Austria, the only power which seemed to oppose his plans was England, and an invasion of that country being apparently hopeless, Napoleon determined to strike her through India. At this time France had very considerable territorial interests in India. We saw in the sketch of Clive's career what success the French adventurers had exerted their influence in Southern Hindustan. England had taken possession of the Cape of Good Hope and in that way guarded the route to India, and Napoleon determined that the only way to offset this advantage was to take possession of Egypt. There has been much speculation as to his real object in his Egyptian campaign. Some of his biographers contend that he had no further intention than to be out of France for a time, while the Directory was rendering itself so unpopular that his accession to absolute power would come about automatically. Others claim that, dissatisfied with conditions in France, he had it in mind to abandon that country and carve out for himself an empire in Asia. It is to be remembered that Napoleon was not a Frenchman. His family was of Italian origin, possibly with traces of Corsican blood, and he looked upon France not from any patriotic point of view, but solely as his affairs fitted in with his own ambitions. He proposed to take possession of Egypt; colonize it with Europeans and from that as a base, undertake the subjugation of Southwestern Asia and India. He is known to have said that the master of Asia would be master of the world. Napoleon planned also to take possession of Turkey and appease Austria by handing over to her the Danubian provinces. It seems impossible to explain his plans on any other supposition than that he aimed at founding an eastern empire, for before he set sail for Egypt there were already signs that France would be plunged again in war with Austria. On May 19, 1798, he set sail for Egypt with 30,000 men. Looking back over events, the expedition seems to have been mad in its conception. On June 12 he took possession of Malta, then held by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem under the protection of the Tsar. He declared it to be the strongest place in Europe and announced his intention of occupying it permanently. On July 2 he reached Alexandria and on the 8th he reached Cairo. On August 1 the English fleet under command of Nelson appeared in Aboukir Bay, in which Napoleon's fleet was anchored. Nelson formed his plans with promptness, and although the enemy was protected by shore batteries in the rear and a shoal in front, the intrepid Admiral ordered one section of his fleet to sail through the tortuous channels, while the other made an attack from the sea. The battle was fought in the evening, and the result was never in doubt for a single moment. When daylight came on August 2, out of the nineteen French ships only two had escaped. There is no doubt at all that in actual weight of metal the French were greatly superior to the English, and that the victory was due to the skill of Nelson as a commander and the splendid courage of his men. The battle of the Nile has been called "Nelson's Masterpiece." Trafalgar was necessary to complete his fame and make England's position on the sea secure; but after the Battle of the Nile there never was any serious question as to her naval supremacy. The result of that

famous fight was the impartation to the English navy of a supreme degree of confidence, which was supplemented by a dread of its power in the minds of every other nation.

Napoleon's condition was now almost desperate. With the sea closed to him by Nelson, and no ships to make use of if the way were open, his proposed occupation of Greece and Turkey became impossible. Meanwhile the Sultan had sent an army of 12,000 men against him. Napoleon advanced to meet them and he proceeded successfully as far as Joppa, which town he took with 2,000 prisoners. Having insufficient food for so many men, he had them taken to the seashore and shot. Possibly there is not, in modern history at least, anything comparable to this brutal act. He next attacked Acre. This fortress was on the sea, and Sir Sidney Smith, having arrived off it with a squadron, a successful defence was made. For two months he vainly endeavored to capture the place, but was obliged to retire. He himself said that the check administered to him by Sir Sidney Smith completely changed the history of the world, for if he had taken Acre, the tribes subject to the Pasha Izzar, whose headquarters it was, would have given in their allegiance to him and he would have been able to form an army with which he would have conquered Asia. In his retreat from Acre, heat and pestilence played on a small scale the part which cold and hunger performed on the awful retreat from Moscow. On returning to Egypt, he endeavored to strengthen his position there and was successful in defeating a Turkish army sent against him. He claimed that he drove 12,000 of them into the sea, where they were drowned. During the two months he remained in Egypt on this occasion his career was one of frightful bloodshed. He endeavored to appeal to the religious passion of the people. He told the Moslem priests that the French Revolution was really a victory for their faith. He declared himself a Mussulman, commissioned by God to overthrow Christianity. But his pretences were rejected by those to whom they were addressed, and seeing that all hope of an Eastern triumph was at an end, he fled from Egypt to France. His action was hastened by the shrewdness of Sir Sidney Smith, who sent him a packet of European newspapers setting out the straits to which France had been reduced by the incompetence of the Directory. He could not have been more heartily welcomed if he had returned a conqueror.

STRUCTURE OF THE GLOBE

A gull will follow a ship across the ocean; an albatross will sleep upon the wing; an aviator flies through the air, not exactly "with the greatest of ease," but he flies; a balloonist climbs up into the atmosphere. Neither the gull, the albatross, the aviator nor the balloonist leaves the Earth. They all leave the ground, or the water, whichever may be their starting point, but they are still in the Earth. Men move about in the Earth, not on it. We are fitted to live upon a part of the Earth, which is solid; we cannot live in that part of the Earth which is liquid, and we need artificial aids to enable us to live in that part of the Earth which is gaseous. In a broad sense mankind is a subterranean race, for the atmosphere is just as much a part of the Earth as is the ocean or the mountains. It is more easily moved than the former and much more easily than the latter, but, as far as science has been able to ascertain, there is no part of the sphere, which we inhabit, that is not subject to local disturbance either in the form of winds, waves or earthquakes. Therefore when we speak of the structure of the Earth, the starting point is not under our feet, but high over our heads. The Earth is a spheroidal body something like 8,000 miles in diameter. Our information regarding it extends from a distance a few miles above the sea level to points a few miles below it. We know fairly accurately the distribution of land and water surfaces, something of the lower strata of the atmosphere, something of the materials which form the land surface, and in a few places something of the nature of the solid matter at points from a mile to a mile and a half below the land surface. If we took off the outside of the Globe the part of it about which the most learned person can speak with certainty, our neighbors in Mars would not notice the difference in the size of our dwelling place. Beneath our feet is a mass larger than the planet Venus, about which we know nothing at all; above us is a belt of gaseous matter.

Sir John Herschel from the barometer estimated that the mass of the atmosphere is about one-twelve-hundred-thousandth part of the solid Earth. Apparently there are atmospheric elevations and depressions. If we could get away from the Earth altogether, and the atmosphere were visible to us, we would find it present an uneven surface. Around the Globe south of the Equator we would see an atmospheric range of mountains, and north of that line we would see another encircling range more irregular in its form. At least this seems inferable from the fact that there are two permanent belts of high atmospheric pressure extending around the Globe. We would also see, if we continued our observations, that the surface of the atmosphere would be subject to almost constant changes—airquakes. No one knows how high the atmosphere extends. At one time it was generally accepted as settled that the atmospheric envelope was not more than 45 miles thick, but observations on meteors indicate that it may be 200 miles thick, although the higher strata are supposed to be exceedingly attenuated. Recently this latter proposition has been questioned, and the sug-

gestion has been advanced that the higher atmospheric strata differ materially from those that are lower, both in constituent parts and density, but this is all as yet in the realm of the vaguest speculation. In passing it may be mentioned that the observations on meteors above referred to are based upon the theory, which seems to be proved, that these bodies come from points wholly outside the Earth, and that they become luminous through friction with the atmosphere. Hence every meteor, which we see, is supposed to be within the atmosphere at the time it is visible, and if the distance of one can be approximated, it affords pretty conclusive evidence that there is atmosphere at that distance.

Our knowledge of what is beneath our feet is exceedingly limited. Shafts have been sunk for mining operation to a distance of a mile and a quarter. If we took a large orange and stuck the finest cambric needle in the rind one-five-hundredth part of an inch, we would make a hole that would bear a deeper relation to the whole orange than the greatest mining to the whole mass of the Earth, shaft bears to the whole mass of the Earth, and if we should place the little hole in the orange under a microscope and endeavor to determine what the interior of the orange was like, we would have just as good a chance of being correct as we are in endeavoring to determine what the interior of the Earth is like from the observations that can be made by means of the few holes that have been made in the surface of the solid land. Because it has been ascertained that in some places the temperature rises as we descend into the Earth at a rate, which, if continued, would melt everything at a distance of 45 miles, scientific men jumped to the conclusion a half century or so ago that we live on a comparatively thin crust, beneath which are surging billows of fire. Later observations have shown that this increase in temperature is not uniform, and there are so many arguments against the hypothesis, the central part of the Earth being molten, that the theory of central fires has been generally abandoned. A later theory is that there may be an absolutely rigid core, surrounded by a more or less irregular envelope of highly heated matter upon which the solid "crust" rests. On this theory earthquakes, volcanoes and earth-tiltings are thought to be explainable, but it is not generally accepted. Science is in a state of suspended judgment as to the nature of the interior of the Globe.

But some may ask if volcanoes are not evidence of subterranean fires. They are certainly not evidence of fires as we ordinarily use the term, that is to signify something that is in process of combustion. They undoubtedly imply the existence of heat, or at least of chemical action which at certain stages is manifested in heat. It is conceivable that there are places in the interior of the Earth, though not at any great depth, where the heat caused by dynamic pressure is great, and that the sea may find its way into those places, whereby chemical action is stimulated, gases are formed and an explosion takes place. The fact that nearly all active volcanoes are near the sea lends color to such a suggestion. We know also that many rocks contain water in considerable quantity just as others contain petroleum. Volcanic eruptions may be due to the conversion of this water into steam. That volcanoes have their origin in a molten core of the Earth is wholly improbable. The most tremendous eruption ever known and the most violent earthquake are entirely too insignificant relatively to the mass of the Earth to be due to the existence of a mass of molten matter, more than seven thousand miles in diameter.

The Great Novelist

II.
(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Guy de Maupassant was an exponent of realism. He believed that anything is worthy of art if the artist knows how to handle it. He belonged to the same school of literature as Zola, but critics class him in the foremost ranks along with his master Flaubert. His realism does not concern itself with vulgarity or crudity, though he never loses sight of the truth in his endeavor to produce the beautiful. In his short stories, stories which are nearly always sad, by the way, he uses a variety of settings, but chooses them all from the ordinary, a furnished room, a restaurant, a farmyard, perhaps. His characters are never idealized, but invariably true to the commonplace. He does not choose exceptional types for the heroines and heroes of his novels, and perhaps rouses the reader's sympathy the more readily inasmuch as we can all understand the feelings which prompt the acts of those whose life he depicts; for while we can reverence and endeavor to imitate the wisest, the strongest and the purest of men and women, just because most of us fall far short of our ideal, we can the more readily appreciate the strivings and the failings of the weak, and rejoice over a victory gained by those who, like ourselves, are prone to fall.

At the same time de Maupassant was a pessimist, and, in spite of his genius, a far from pleasure-inspiring writer. Whether or not his own impending fate clouded his life all the way through we cannot tell, but there is no doubt that his mind was unsettled by the terrible hallucination described in "Horia" during the period when he produced his last two books. The novelist had surrendered his

whole being to the influence of nature, and not allowed his mind to dominate his inclinations, choosing as his divinity simply beauty as expressed by material things. Such a surrender is not productive of health, morally or mentally, else were we no better than the brutes. "To the feast of nature de Maupassant had opened all his senses. The day came when he felt his ideas flying around him like butterflies." Nothing can be more pitifully tragic than the great writer's end. His reason all unstrung, "like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh," he died at the early age of forty-three.

His principal works are "Une Vie," "Notre Coeur," "Pierre and Jeanne," "Maitre Hauchecorne and Mlle. Fifi." The following touching extract is from "Une Vie," and tells of an episode in the last days of Madame Jeanne. The story itself is very pathetic, and describes the life of a woman from its happy beginning to its pitiful close. It depicts her as a bride, and as a widow; as a young mother, in all her hopeful happiness, and as a grief-stricken woman of all she loves bereft. We quote:

"They left the wagon with the Couillard family; then, while Rosalie and her son went off to attend to their business, the caretakers offered Jeanne the chance of taking a little turn around the chateau, the present owners of it being absent; so they gave her the keys. "Alone she set out; and when she was fairly alone before the old manor house by the seaside, she stopped to look at its outside once again. It had changed in nothing. The large greyish building that day showed upon its old walls the smile of sunshine. All the shutters were closed.

"A bit of a dead branch fell from above upon her dress. She raised her eyes. It came from the plane-tree. She drew near the big tree with its smooth, pale bark, she caressed it with her hand almost as if it had been an animal. Her foot struck something in the grass—a fragment of rotten wood; lo, it was the last fragment of the very bench on which she had sat so often with those of her own family about her, so many years ago; the very bench which had been set in place on the same day that Julian had made his first visit.

"She turned then to the double doors of the vestibule of the house, and she had great trouble to open them; for the heavy key, grown rusty, refused to turn in the lock. At length the lock yielded with a heavy grinding of its springs; and the door, a little obstinate itself, gave her entrance with a cloud of dust.

"At once, and almost running, she went upstairs to find what had once been her own room. She could hardly recognize it, hung as it was with a new light paper; but throwing open a window she looked out, and stood motionless, stirred even to the depths of her being at the sight of all that landscape so much beloved; the thicket, the elms, the flat reaches, and the sea, dotted with brown sails, and seemingly motionless in the distance.

"She began prowling about the great empty, lonely dwelling. She even stopped to look at the little discolored spots on the walls. Spots familiar to her eyes—

"Her mother's room—in it she found, stuck behind the door in a dark corner near the bed, a fine gold hairpin; one which she herself had stuck there so long ago, and which she had often tried to find during the past years. Nobody had ever come across it. She drew it out as a relic beyond price, and kissed it, and carried it away with her. Everywhere about the house she walked, recognizing almost invisible marks in the hangings of the rooms that had not been changed; she made out once more those curious faces that a childish imagination gives often to the patterns and stuffs, to marbles and to shadings of the ceilings grown dingy with time. On she walked with soundless footsteps, wholly alone in the immense silent house, as one who crosses a cemetery. All her life was buried in it.

"She went downstairs to the drawing-room. It was sombre behind the closed shutters; for some time she could not distinguish anything; then her eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Two armchairs were set before the chimney, as if people had just quitted them; and even the odor of the room, an odor which it had always kept—that old, vague sweet odor belonging to some old houses—entered Jeanne's very being, enwrapped her in souvenirs, intoxicated her memory? She remained gasping, breathing in that breath of the past, and with her eyes fixed upon those two chairs; for suddenly in a sort of hallucination which gave place to a positive idea—she saw, as she had so often seen her father and her mother sitting there warming their feet by the fire.

"The vision disappeared. She remained forgetful of everything during some moments; then slowly she recovered her self-possession, and would have fled from the room, fearful of losing her very senses. By chance her glance fell against the doorpost on which she leaned; and lo, before her eyes were the marks that had been made to keep track of Poulet's height as he was growing up.

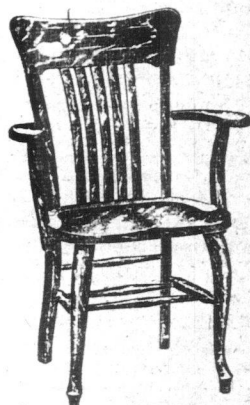
"The little marks climbed the painted wood with unequal intervals; figures traced with the penknife noted down the different ages and growths during the boy's life. Sometimes the jottings were in the handwriting of her father, a large hand; sometimes they were in her smaller hand; sometimes in that of Aunt Lisette, a little tremulous. It seemed to her that the child of other days was actually there, standing before her with his blond hair, pressing his little forehead against the wall so that his height could be measured, and the Baron was crying: 'Why, Jeanne! He has grown a whole centimetre since six weeks ago!' She kissed the piece of wood in a frenzy of love and desolateness."

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