

The Charlottetown Herald.

NEW SERIES

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1907

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Solution of French Problems Rests With Workingmen.

Paris, June 28.—A very remarkable man is M. Soulange-Bodin, curé of the Church of Notre Dame du Travail. Yesterday morning I sat for an hour, one of a strange and varied company, in the dingy little office behind the sacristy where he holds daily receptions from 9 to 11. We were of all sorts and conditions of men, the gentlemen in the frock coat and silk hat seated next to the peasant woman with her tray basket of greens, the veiled lady in rustling morning ruffling elbows with an ancient boulevardier somewhat the worse for much wine and little water. A young man opposite me flourished a diamond ring and a veiled handkerchief with an expression suggestive of a revolting neighbor slunk behind the open door in a pitiable effort to conceal deformities too painful for the light. Every third or fourth person in the line was laden with floral offerings of amazing size and variety of color and for a good half hour we all occupied ourselves in taking covert stock of each other and watching the door.

I had some curiosity to see the man I had heard of as doing more work than any ten priests in Paris. He has spiritual jurisdiction over no less than 40,000 souls and has transformed one of the worst districts of the city into one of the best. His parish organization would be wonderful even in the United States, where the parochial system has renobed its perfection, and in France it is altogether unique. He has 4,000 workingmen organized into a Christian labor union, night schools for the boys and young men, domestic science classes for the girls, conferences on hygienic and economical modes of living for fathers and mothers of families, gymnasiums, debating clubs, reading rooms, baths, a choral society, English classes, a family club where the families from the crowded buildings for blocks around congregate in the evenings for reunion, instruction and recreation. He has an employment bureau, a committee of men engaged in refuting Socialism and propagating Catholic ideals and beliefs in the wine rooms of the quarter, a parish insurance society, a society for supplying marriage portions to poor girls, a parish paper, a parish theatre, a free dispensary, a day nursery, besides innumerable religious confraternities and sodalities and charitable circles for visiting the sick, burying the dead, caring for infants and the aged, for providing, in short, for every possible spiritual and temporal need.

When he came in—the originator and active heart and soul and head of this vast organization—he looked like a man without a care in the world. He is big and bluff and florid in appearance, more like a Teuton than a Frenchman, with a resonant voice and a ready and infectious laugh. His entry caused a curious stimulation to thrill the waiting circle. Weary-looking women smiled and nodded to each other, the bibulous gentleman straightened up, and the dandy withdrew his fragrant handkerchief from general circulation.

We had all given our names to the sacristan and the curé retired into a box of an inner office and received each in the order of his coming. I was the last arrival and had the opportunity of observing how quickly and agreeably he disposed of his numerous and conglomerate clientele. Every one came out smiling, and when my turn came at last I found the curé smiling too, in the midst of the floral tributes that had accumulated on all sides of him. He does not speak English, but manifested his genius for making the best of things by adapting himself to my French, a medium of communication which, like the telegraph, was meant to serve for crises, but never for conversation.

The solution of the present religious and political problems in France, in the opinion of this man who has solved many problems, rests primarily with the workingman. The religious crisis is at root a social revolution and certainly the forerunner of some social reconstruction. The work of M. Soulange-Bodin is so notable and interesting just now because it represents three things that have been more or less neglected by the Church in France, in the first place, organization; in the second, personal contact between priest and people; in the third, care and education of the laboring classes.

It is in the laboring classes that there exists the great disaffection that has made possible the absolute dispossession of the Church in a nominally Catholic country. Father Tanqueray, the Superior of Sulpician Seminary at Issy, a few miles

out of Paris, first told me of the curé of Notre Dame du Travail in speaking of the large losses of the Church among the laborers congregated in the large cities and the reasons for these losses. The clergy in France, he pointed out, unlike that of other countries, have not been drawn from the laboring classes. Their family traditions for the priesthood, aside from a large number from the nobility and bourgeoisie, are the sons of the small proprietors in the country districts. They have had little knowledge of the needs and conditions of life of the city laborer and they have been, for the most part, pious and single-minded men occupied only with their spiritual ministrations, uninterested in social problems and unaware of the needs of the people.

The detachment process was only too easy. It has always been something to mislead ignorant and discontented men with vain and utopian promises, and in this case the representation that the Church had no concern for the welfare of the laborer and that the eternal preaching of reward in another world was only to delude him into submitting to injustice in this had a certain speciousness that made it impressive. It was Socialism, of course—France is full of Socialism—and not even sincere Socialism. It was merely a ruse of clever politicians to gain friends for themselves and weaken the power of the Church. Its success was so complete because until very recently the French laborer did practically no thinking for himself.

In the meantime, however, the Church has realized the situation and the curé of Notre Dame du Travail, as he hastened to assure me, is only one of many pastors in Paris who have adopted his methods to reclaim the workingman. "It is a slow process," he said, "but the only practical one."

"But how do you bear the present uncertainty of your position? I asked. "Do you feel secure here in this great plant you have established?"

"We are secure only for the day. But we must keep on doing the best we can for the day. It is only thus that we strengthen ourselves for whatever may come tomorrow."

"And what do you think will come tomorrow? What of the future?"

The curé is an unconquerable optimist, but he looked very grave for a moment. "The future—ah, who knows?"

I put the same question to every one I met—priest and laymen, clerical and anti-clerical—and I receive invariably the same answer. Who knows? The atmosphere is quiet enough now, but there is something portentous in this strange quiet and great uncertainties. Everybody seems to be waiting, taking what comes with a curious stoicism and awaiting the horizon for a storm with an odd mingling of hope and fear.

The Sulpicians have been driven to Issy by the seizure of their house in Paris and they know not the day or the hour when the Issy seminary may also be declared to be fettered to the state. "I have a little private library," said Father Tanqueray, "much of it collected during my residence in Baltimore, and I actually do not know what to do with it during the vacation. If I leave it here, the house may be confiscated and I shall never see a book again."

"But how do you suffer such injustice?" I asked, as we in America are always asking. "Is there no spirit among French Catholics?"

"You must not forget that in France we have a long history. We are bound by a dozen different allegiances according to our traditions and our class. We are politically and socially disoriented and we have no religious organization."

There are indications, however, of a strong and general movement in the way of organization. In this movement, it is encouraging to learn, the leaders are the young men. "L'Union is a comparatively new organization with a membership of about 75,000 young men through France. It works on a kind of 'altruism' which will gradually influence the masses to substitute religious for irreligious principles and Christian hopes for Socialist dreams. "L'Union is a young man's movement, its methods are less radical and direct than those of the 'Sillon' and membership being drawn from the more conservative classes and its opportunities for influencing the laborer being therefore less prominent. Both are doing effective work in different ways. In the meantime, also, there is a general effort to profit by the mistakes of the past. Courses in economics and sociology are being introduced and the students for the priesthood are being impressed with the necessity of social as well as spiritual zeal.

Father Tanqueray has a thorough knowledge of the needs of the Church in France and he is an exceptionally well-informed Church official in America. It is therefore not without significance that he declares that what has happened to the Church in France may some day apply to the Church in the United States if she neglects the social apostolate.

The Abbé Klein, professor at the Catholic University of Paris, and a member of the Republican party, takes a somewhat different view of the situation. When I saw him the other day at his pleasant villa at Bellerive, up the Seine, he was engaged in preparing the two lectures on the subject which he is to deliver in July at the Chicago University and was naturally full of his theme. He believes that the cause of the present crisis are purely historic and political, that it could have been foreseen at any time within the past fifty years, and was foreseen by the far-sighted. He laughed at the suggestion, made and received seriously enough by others, that a radical and violent change, perhaps even the violence of revolution, might be the only way out of the present intolerable and apparently hopeless position.

"Men don't fight for ideas nowadays in France," he said. "They fight for food and drink, as they are fighting now in the south, but not for principles. The Government will never go to the extreme of provocation," he added. "It is wise enough to know that so long as the great bulk of the people feel no difference they will be content."

A French marine officer, asked if he thought there was any possibility of serious outbreak even in case the government closed all the churches, answered in the negative.

"I very much fear that the majority of Frenchmen are too indifferent," he said, "to care to come to the point of revolt."

From an observer's point of view, on the other hand, French Catholics appear far from indifferent. I visited churches in different parts of the city Sunday morning and found all crowded except the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the only one of the number likely to be frequented by tourists. The congregations were reverent and devout and there was quite a large proportion of men among them as could be found in the United States. I have never chanced into any church in Paris any day in the week at any hour without finding not only women but men engaged in absorbed and earnest prayer. At the Church of the Sacred Heart, at Montmartre, where the Blessed Sacrament is perpetually exposed, one finds priests and religious, men and women, all night long. At noon today, at the pilgrimage Church of Notre Dame des Victoires, there was a fair-sized congregation occupied in private devotions. There is twice as much apparent piety in France as in Italy, even when one judges France by Paris, the stronghold of all the forces that was against the spirit.

The situation is full of contradictions. It is as enigmatic and extreme to a foreigner as the French character. There is appalling indifference and there is beautiful piety, there is profound social unrest and there are powers working in silence, both for good and evil, that one can feel rather than hear or see. Whether it will come suddenly, as by revolution, or slowly, by the gradual processes of education, it is inevitable that there will be a great change in France. Just now there is calm without tranquillity and peace without security, is France perhaps being prepared to serve as the battle ground for the fiercest approaching conflict, universal in its influence, between the Church and the World?—Anne Elizabeth O'Hare, in Catholic Universe.

The investigation into a recent railway accident in the United States proved that the disaster which killed thirty-one persons and injured a hundred others could have been averted, if a certain telegraph operator had been at his post. That he was not there was no fault of his, for he had to shift his look at the freight and baggage, and carry the mail to and from the post office. It was the last named occupation he was engaged in at the moment when his presence at the telegraph key would have prevented this frightful slaughter. There were coroner's juries during the Irish famine who brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Lord John Russell. The coroner's jury in the case we are considering would have been abundantly justified in bringing in a verdict of manslaughter, at least a sine die, if the official of the Pere Marquette Railway.—Casket.

We shall esteem it a favor if you remit now your subscription for 1907.

Kidney Disease And Its Danger.

Kidney disease comes on quietly—may have been in the system for years, before you suspected the real cause of your trouble. There may have been backaches, neuritis, edema, rheumatism, etc. Perhaps you did not know these were symptoms of kidney disease, so the trouble kept on growing worse, until disturbances of the water appeared, or there was gravel or retention of urine, or some such sign of kidney trouble.

Doan's Kidney Pills should be taken at the first sign of anything wrong; they strengthen the kidneys and help them to filter the blood properly—help them to flush off, and carry away with the surplus water, all those impurities which the blood gathers up in its circuit of the body.

Mrs. Alfred LeBlanc, Black Cape, Que., writes: "I felt my duty to say a word about Doan's Kidney Pills. I suffered dreadfully from kidney trouble, but I could not sleep or bend. After having used two boxes I now feel most completely cured. I highly recommend Doan's Kidney Pills."

MISCELLANEOUS.

"Does your husband play the races as much as he used to?"

"No," answered young Mrs. Torkins; "he hasn't as much money as he used to have."

Mrs. Fred Laine, St. George, Ont., writes:—"My little girl would cough, so at night that neither she nor I could get any rest. I gave her Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup and am thankful to say it cured her cough quickly."

The Optimist—Surely it is worth something to a man to live in a country where he dare call his soul his own.

The Pessimist—Well, yes. I suppose he can get more for it when he comes to sell it.—Puck.

Minard's Liniment Cures Distemper.

First stranger—Excuse me, but you are a physician, I believe?

Second stranger—You are mistaken sir.

First stranger—But I overheard you say you followed the medical profession.

Second stranger—And so I do. I'm an undertaker.—Detroit Tribune.

Muscular Rheumatism.

Mr. H. Wilkinson, Stratford, Ont., says:—"I suffered much pleasure to say that I experienced great relief from Muscular Rheumatism by using two boxes of Milburn's Rheumatic Pills." Price 50c a box.

"The Parkers have all gone into deep mourning for a very distant relative. Don't you think it's a sign they're rich?"

"No. It's a sign that the distant relative was rich."—New York Life.

Milburn's Sterling Headache Powders give women prompt relief from monthly pains and leave no bad after effects whatever. Be sure you get Milburn's. Price 20c and 25c cents, all dealers.

Mother-in-law—Has the young man who saved my life yesterday called upon you yet?

Son-in-law—Yes, indeed, he has already made his apologies.—Translated For Transatlantic Tales From Pilegende Blatter.

Sprained Arm.

Mary—Ovington, Jasper, Ont., writes:—"My mother had a badly sprained arm. Nothing we used did her any good. Then father got Hayward's Yellow Oil and it cured mother's arm in a few days." Price 25c.

"So poor old Bill's gone, 'as?'

"Ow was he killed?"

"Three ton of cement fell on his chest."

"Ah, poor feller! 'E allus said as 'e was weak there."—Tattler.

Was Weak and Run Down

WOULD FEEL ANY OTHER WAY AWAY

Mrs. J. H. Armstrong, Port Elmsley, Ont., tells of her experience with

MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS.

She writes: "It is with gratitude I tell how my Heart and Nerve Pills benefited me."

"I was very weak and run down, had headaches nearly every day and very often would faint away, in fact, my doctor said that sometimes I would never come out of the faint. It was through one of your travelling agents that I was induced to try Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and after taking three boxes I am glad to relate it has been a number of years since I had a fainting spell and scarcely ever have a headache. Too much cannot be said in praise of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, for in me they have effected a perfect cure."

Price 50 cents per box or 3 boxes for \$1.25, at all dealers, or The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.