

little children. God, in His wisdom, afflicted me as He has so many others in this cruel diabolical war. I was not resigned, I murmured against Him—I shook my fist in His face. A lion entered into my soul. But when my Heavenly Father laid me low on the bed of death, my eyes were opened. Christ drove out that demon and I lie before you here a chastened and penitent man. Forgive me, beloved wife and children—forgive me, neighbors and friends—forgive me, Almighty God, and permit me to join my dear son in heaven."

He sank back on the pillow for a moment, fatigued with the effort he had made. The women were sobbing, the men stood with downcast heads. He closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them again and said to the priest:

"Mon Pere, I am ready." He recited the Confiteor in Latin, while the priest prepared to administer the Viaticum. After he had received his God, his lips moved for some moments in silent prayer. The room was heavenly still—save for the breathing of the multitude that filled it.

"Now M. le Cure, the rest, if you please," said the dying man to the priest. The priest administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, during which Pere Bildeau's two sons with their wives, and his two daughters, with their husbands, who lived at a distance, arrived. They all knelt at the foot of the bed. He saw and recognized them with a smile. When the Sacrament had been administered the priest said to the dying man:

"Unite your sufferings, my son, to those of your Saviour's on Calvary, and you will have no fear of death. You need not have; you have always been ready for it by a life of honesty, sobriety, piety and charity towards all. You have brought up a large family in the practice of piety and all other virtues; you are about to ascend into heaven to be united with the one who is already there and to watch over those who remain."

Once more Pere Bildeau opened his eyes, and smiled at his wife, who knelt close to the bedside, holding his hand. Suddenly there came a change. Drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead, his nostrils became pinched, his hands grew cold as ice, as the weeping wife and mother clasped them in hers. His breath began to grow labored; his agony had begun.

The doctor stepped forward, making a sign for strangers to leave the room. They rose from their knees and silently departed—the school children had already been led away by their teachers. Soon only the family were left. The priest began the prayers for the agonizing.

The sun was setting behind a great black cloud and the rising wind that betokens rain was stirring the window curtains, as the soul of Pere Bildeau faded slowly forth towards the gates of paradise. The solemn voice of the priest filled the room.

"Come to his assistance, Saints of God; hasten to meet him, Angels of God, receive his soul, present it to the Almighty, May Jesus Christ, Who calls you—"

One great sigh from the lips of the dying and the Cure finished his invocation silently.

The doctor leaned over the bed; the priest rose from his knees. He looked lovingly at the face of the old man—his eyes filled with tears. Then in a voice trembling with emotion, he turned to the family, still kneeling, and said:

"My children walk in the footsteps of your father; imitate him in his life if one day you wish to die as holy a death as this—in the peace of the Lord."

Then softly passing through their midst, he went forth into the twilight, gray and cloudy wiping the tears from his cheeks.—Rosary Magazine.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR DECEMBER
RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE NATION

Feminism is a term which is very much in vogue nowadays in newspapers and magazines; it is employed, and in a general way, to denote the preponderating part women are taking in public affairs. Feminism reveals itself in women's committees and meetings, women's legal and legislative projects, petitions, etc., all gotten up by the gentler sex for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that their rights and privileges are not properly recognized. In a more restricted sense, Feminism, we believe, means the revindication of the political rights of women, for, according to the feminist concept of human freedom, woman being man's equal, she should have all the privileges which man enjoys, even to standing beside him in the polling booth and dropping her ballot into the urn. So clamorous, in fact, have certain classes of women become in these years, that, in not a few commonwealths, they have secured the franchise and are even admitted to offices in public affairs hitherto considered the exclusive appanage of men. Women are already in provincial parliaments here in Canada. In England, they are in the House of Commons; in the United States, they are in

Congress; they wear the judge's gown; they plead at the bar; they serve on juries; they are even trying to invade the Protestant pulpit. Undoubtedly, there are many duties which women, as citizens and wives of citizens, can render to society; undoubtedly, too, there are attractions in public life which are strong to resist; there may even be public abuses calling for remedies, abuses serious enough to draw women away from their homes and into the public forum. One strongly suspects that those feminists who are clamoring the loudest for their political rights are the ones on whose shoulders home-life and its obligations rest the lightest. The Church does not curtail the liberty of women, but she is perfectly well aware that they have not the gift of bi-location; and the Church, notwithstanding all her wisdom, is at a loss to know how a woman can fulfil the essential duties of wife and mother at home and, at the same time, occupy herself in such public affairs as are usually reserved to men. If there were no hands among the stronger sex ready and willing to work for the public weal, there might be some reason for women taking up unusual burdens; but women themselves know that this happens rarely, and when there is question of choosing between the home and the hustings, it should be easy for them to decide which of the two should go by the board. Teaching little children their prayers and their catechism is a nobler and more useful work to society than standing on a soap-box in skirted armor, and shouting, like the American politician of old, "give me liberty or give me death!" Besides, what right-minded man cares to see his wife, or mother, or sister, weltering in the turmoil of politics? The development of feminism in its political sense, while not an evil in itself, might, if pushed to the limit, affect the lives of millions of women and their real vocation in the world, and turn the movement into a moral question of very grave importance.

However, in many lands, even here in Canada, women have secured the vote. We must accept the accomplished fact, and try to turn this new source of strength into a power for good. New needs and new problems call for new forms of service and new methods. No one can reasonably object to the enfranchisement or to the privileges that the vote carries with it. A Catholic writer tells us that "there is nothing in Catholic theology which excludes women from the franchise, or from the election polls, or from parliamentary or professional life. The Church never asserts the natural inability of woman to do any of the things which man can do. She never puts woman in an inferior position, either as regards intellect, or will, or capacity of action, in any line of enterprise. She confines herself to one proposition about woman, namely, that she has functions to perform in life which are hers alone. These functions are the creation of the family, and the organization of the home, and all that home implies."

This doctrine is sound and should be applied to the age in which we live, as it has been applied in the past. However, so many changes—for the worse mostly—have taken place in the functioning of modern society, so many abuses have crept in, that modern methods must cope with them, and Catholic women would be recreant to their duty if they did not assert themselves, and endeavor, not for any love of politics but in the interest of sound civic morality, to stem by their votes the noxious tide. Enfranchisement has put a vast power in their hands, but let them use it in the best interests of society. There is, for instance, the divorce question threatening to become lively in Canada; there is the modern moving picture plague threatening to undermine the morality of millions.

Why should not women exercise their influence to banish evils of which they themselves are the greatest sufferers? Our Catholic schools are menaced. Why should not Catholic women organize and by their votes neutralize any efforts made against us? When the enemies of the Church see not merely the bulk of Catholic men but also a solid phalanx of Catholic women voters ready to oppose their designs, they will be chary of launching any scheme detrimental to Catholic interests. Happily, we have with us here in Canada an organization which gives promise of brilliant service in the cause of truth and justice. This is the Catholic Women's League, which, although founded only a couple of years ago, is already established in many cities of the Dominion and counts its membership by the thousands. This League, made up of educated and enterprising women, although non-political, will none the less be a formidable social power in the coming years.

But while fully granting that women have many outlets for their activities in public life, the Church nevertheless is convinced that exercising political rights or sharing in popular agitations is not the whole of a woman's life, nor is it the chief end of it. Motherhood is the end for which God destined her in the nation—and this, we believe, is true feminism. Motherhood, in the first and obvious sense of the word, is the glory of woman; it makes the human race her debtor; and the veneration which surrounds her when this privilege becomes hers is one of the sweetest rewards of her

trials and sacrifices. But no Catholic mother worthy of the title feels that her full duty is performed when she gives physical life to one of God's rational beings. There is another essential duty awaiting her, a loftier and more delicate form of motherhood which she instinctively feels and which is often the source of more poignant sorrow than the other. This is the motherhood of her child's soul, for it is not true that new anxieties arise with the care of rearing the little tyrant? There is a character to form, a mind to nourish, a religious sentiment to foster, a moral sense to excite and make permanent. What will it profit a nation if its citizens lack these qualities? And what greater service can woman render to a nation than by inculcating them? For this reason, and speaking in general, the Church looks, first, with disapproval upon anything which puts an obstacle to marriage; still more on anything which creates a distaste for marriage or brings it into disrepute; secondly, she disapproves of any kind of distraction which would make marriage difficult or interfere with the creation of the family and the development of the home. Let women ponder over these things and, when tempted by political aspirations or by the bait of public careers, ask themselves where their duty lies, and which calls the louder to them, the Nation or the Home.

On the other hand, while the Church views marriage as the normal and proper state for humanity in general, she does not impose on any single individual the obligation of marriage. Happily, there are other forms of motherhood for women who are not burdened with the care of home and family. For such people there is a vast field of action in the nation and it is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge that there are thousands who have seized the opportunity to render service to their fellow-beings. There are brave women, young and old, who toil to support themselves and their homes when the natural bread-winners have gone, as well as those who are consecrating their lives to the care of the poor, the old, the sick, and the orphan. We speak not precisely of that lofty form of vicarious and austere motherhood which is found under the cloister veil, but rather of the vocation accepted by the thousands who have not heard the call of the counsels, and who are nevertheless devoting their lives to social service in its various forms. Teaching, nursing, visiting the sick, supporting the poor, the aged and infirm, are truly apostolic labors which they perform after the example of the Master. These labors benefit the family and are therefore a benefit to the nation; and it is the glory of the Catholic Church that she can call on her thousands of her daughters in every land to perform them.

Let women then listen to these calls, for no matter in what station of life their lot may be cast, they have tasks carved out for them. We are living in a time when civilization has gone awry. The moment seems to have arrived for women to begin their work in earnest and share in the reconstruction of a sick world. "During four years' war," exclaimed a recent orator, "men destroyed and bent to earth with savage frenzy the bodies of men whom God had created. Men in their fierceness laid to waste the world, and now women must build it up. The world must be led back again to the sweeter and gentler things of life. The ears of the world were deafened by the din of battle, they must once more hear the harmony of women's voices, chanting at the looms, singing in the fields, crooning to sleep, at eventide, the nestling babes who snuggle to their breast. The family must once more come into its own, and again resume its rightful and imperative place as the safe foundation of the State, and morality and religion, those two protectors of any Government that aspires to endure, must once again receive the peaceful homage of a chastened world."

How timely, therefore, was the invitation of our Holy Father to the members of the League of the Sacred Heart to help by their prayers and little sacrifices so great a project. The role of women in the nation is a topic well worthy of our prayerful consideration during the present month.

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

FRENCH BISHOP AIDS GERMAN SUFFERERS

Bingen, Germany, October 16.—Following the terrible disaster at Oppau, Pope Benedict sent a considerable sum of money through Mgr. Pacelli, Apostolic Nuncio, to be used for relief work among the survivors and sufferers. The Bavarian Government expressed its heartfelt thanks for the gift.

Bishop Paul Remond, who is chaplain general of the Armies of the Rhine, has also sent an urgent appeal for help to the Catholics of France. His message to them reads as follows:

"The frightful catastrophe of Ludwigschafen has plunged thousands of families of German workmen into mourning and distress. The town of Oppau, which had ten thousand inhabitants is completely destroyed. We all know what such devastation means. We have seen so many ruins and so much suffering at home. Therefore, heeding only the voice of our Christian

charity, we must bow with respectful sympathy before this terrible disaster. We shall give to the work of relief our help, sympathy, and prayers."

Bishop Remond then gives instructions for prayers for the dead and urges that collections be made for the relief of the survivors.

This attitude of the French Chaplain General has made a very deep impression.—N. C. W. C.

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—OR—

Is Canada's destiny to be that of a great free nation within the British Empire group of Nations, developing her boundless resources of mine, river, water power, forest, and cultivating her millions upon millions of acres of arable land? Is her development to surpass that of any other nation?

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On December 6th Canada should declare with no uncertain voice that she will not tolerate the false trade theories of visionaries and group leaders which tend toward her economic destruction, toward the separation of her people and the weakening of the ties that bind Canada to the British Empire.

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