

**The Catholic Record**

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**"THE COLLISION OF MIND WITH MIND"**

The long evenings of our long winter are upon us. What shall we do with them? Clubs and societies of all kinds are so multiplied that our young men should have ample means at their disposal to employ them pleasantly and profitably. Yet the complaint is pretty general that the young men of to-day do not avail themselves of the greatly increased facilities of profitably employing their winter evenings; indeed, that they fall far short in this respect of the standard that obtained a generation or two ago. Perhaps they are not entirely to blame. We have very little sympathy in any case with pessimistic criticism. And as examination of conscience is a wholesome exercise it may be heartily recommended to the pessimists.

None the less, wherever the fault lies, the distaste for intellectual activity of any sort amongst our young people is too marked and too widespread not to call for some serious consideration. This is not meant to condemn the relaxation and amusement natural and even necessary for youth in normal health physical and spiritual. These have their place; but a rational creature may reasonably be expected to desire something more.

Reading the other day "The Life of Lord Russell of Kilowen" the following passage struck us as suggestive: "Charles Russell now—1848-52—mingled in the life of the little border town; and for the first time perhaps, began to show signs of the stuff that was in him. He started a debating society, took a keen interest in politics, and made himself felt among his young companions."

As the future Lord Chief Justice of England was born in 1832 it will be seen that at the period referred to he was from sixteen to twenty years old.

"He started a debating society." As we read a train of reminiscence resulted in the suggestion which we believe will be helpful to all interested in cultivating intellectual tastes and stimulating mental activity in the young men of our generation.

Debating societies? Yes, in every club, in every society, in every parish hall, in every rural school, the old-fashioned debates intelligently conducted would go far to relieve a condition which is so generally and so futilely deplored. Nor is there any reason in the world why this admirable form of rational entertainment should be confined to the young.

Some of the direct benefits derived from debating are so desirable and so evident that it is difficult to see how it has fallen into such comparative disfavor. It compels reading, and reading with a purpose. It stimulates mental effort. It necessitates thinking. Giving expression to what is thought and learned about a subject clarifies thought and compels the definite apprehension and assimilation of the knowledge acquired concerning it. From the study of a well-chosen subject of debate, interest in and tastes for biographical, historical or other serious reading are often developed.

It may be useful to call attention of those very up-to-date people who consider the debating club as an outgrown institution of a less cultured age to the fact that it is not alone on the concession lines that it is held in esteem as an important factor in modern education.

In Oxford University, which may fairly claim to be one of the great

educational centres of the world, there is a society known as the Oxford Union which was founded in 1825 for the sole purpose of discussing "any subject not immediately involving theological questions." Almost a century has elapsed since its foundation: during that time "the Union has passed through a variety of changes, and the small community has come to be a body of something like thirteen hundred members, besides life-members who do not reside at the University. In the midst of all these changes it has carefully preserved and emphasized this particular feature, its real *raison d'être*, the Thursday evening debate."

Of the great men who have in large measure made the history of England during the past century a surprisingly large number owe much of their formation to the Oxford Union.

In the life of Cardinal Manning there is a chapter entitled "At the Union, Oxford." After telling of Manning's first triumph in 1829, in presence of many of his distinguished contemporaries, the author asks us to imagine the amazement that a prophet might cause had he "proclaimed to the eighteen or nineteen young men of mark present on that memorable day, that out of their scanty number—the pick of the University I grant—one would be thrice Prime Minister of England, three become Cabinet ministers, three Governors-General of India; one Archbishop of Canterbury; six forsake the Anglican for the Catholic Church; and, wonder of wonders, two, without forfeiting the respect and reverence of their countrymen, become Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church!"

A graduate of Oxford writes enthusiastically of the practical advantages afforded to the students by this organization. "The intimate relation existing between the Union Society at Oxford and the legislative body of the Empire is one of those unseen but mighty forces which, coupled with the practice of sending young men into Parliament, has made St. Stephens a school of statesmen without a peer in history. These men have already learned their *savoir faire* in the Thursday evening debate at the university."

We may be pardoned, then, for a little impatience with those who complain of the mental lethargy of our young men, and, indeed, of the older members of our societies as well, and yet regard debating as an exercise suitable perhaps for school-boys, but rather too antiquated and commonplace to interest them.

Debates may be tiresome, tedious things. So may sermons. Put brains and life and energy into them and they may not only serve several useful purposes but furnish also the keenest intellectual entertainment for young and old.

Incidentally they may go far to solve the problems of clubs and societies now more or less moribund.

**THE FUTURE OF CANADA**

In urging Canadians to study the question of Canada's future we have indicated "The Problem of the Commonwealth," by Lionel Curtis, as embodying the results of much personal thought on the part of the author modified by the discussion of the problem with all sorts and conditions of men in various parts of the Empire. Such a work, whether its conclusions commend themselves to the reader or not, cannot fail to be interesting and enlightening.

We are glad to note that the subject is attracting serious attention. Mr. J. S. Ewart has also published a work, "The Kingdom Papers," which reaches conclusions the very antitheses of those arrived at by the author of "The Problem of the Commonwealth." "The Kingdom Papers" should also be read by those who are interested in the question of Canada's future.

The distinguished Ottawa lawyer during the course of a recent address, however, makes a curious reference to the "Problem of the Commonwealth." He said:

"The scheme of Imperial Federation as advanced in Mr. Curtis' book would make such a federation purposeless, as the very gravest matters, such as foreign policy, the army and navy, India, etc., would be taken out of the field of practical discussion, and there would be little else to discuss."

Either Mr. Ewart is so convinced a believer in the Independence of Canada under the crown that he did not think it worth while to read the book he was criticizing or he has been egregiously misreported.

Mr. Curtis' Federal Parliament of the British Commonwealth, in which Canada would be fully represented, would have for its very reason for existence the discussion and control of "foreign policy, the army and navy, India, etc.," and the etc. would include very little if anything else.

The Citizen concludes its report with the announcement that "there will be a continuation of the same subject in a discussion two weeks hence."

There is need for it. The following paragraph from a leading article, "Britain's Coming Industrial Supremacy," in the October Nineteenth Century may serve to bring home to Canadians how much is taken for granted by some people in the proposed changes in our relations with Great Britain:

"The War as has been shown at the beginning of this article may cost about £7,500,000,000. That is a colossal burden and the British Empire should endeavor to pay off the debt with reasonable speed. The War was waged not merely for the benefit of the United Kingdom but for that of the British Empire as a whole. It seems therefore only fair that the British Dominions should assume their full share of the cost of the War, especially as the assumption of their part of the burden should prove highly beneficial to them. A large increase in taxation throughout the Dominions would most powerfully stimulate production. Hitherto the development of the Empire has been hindered very seriously by the fact that too many emigrants have endeavored to make a living not by production but by trade and speculation. Nearly 40% of the inhabitants of New South Wales and Victoria live in Sydney and Melbourne. Several years ago when I was in the West of Canada I found that the principal industry consisted in gambling in real estate. The Dominions have developed so slowly, very largely because money was too cheap, taxes too low, and life too easy. Men could make a good living by little work. If Great Britain should, by the unwillingness of the Dominions, be forced to take over an unduly large share of the war debt, it may be ruinous not only to the Mother Country but to the Empire as a whole, especially if the Dominions should practise at the same time an exclusive policy towards British manufactures."

This is a refreshingly novel point of view. We have been accustomed to hear of the debt of gratitude Canada owes to England for lending us the capital necessary to develop our resources. All wrong, radically wrong.

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So instead of gratitude to England Canada owes a grudge to the selfish policy of English capitalists for the condition of squalid ease of her inhabitants and the undeveloped state of her resources. Our real reason for gratitude will come when we are apportioned our due share of \$40,000,000,000 of debt when "a large increase in taxation will powerfully stimulate production" and when ease-loving Canadians will have to "work for a living."

The proposed—perhaps impending—change in the status of Canada after the War will hardly be put before Canadians for their adoption with all the candor that characterizes J. Ellis Barker's presentation of the case. But it can not be too often or insistently urged on Canadians that changes in our relations with the rest of the Empire will be the dominant question of higher politics in the near future. Unless the whole question be intelligently studied beforehand we may be hurried into ill considered action, which will profoundly and radically affect the future of Canada.

**NEWSPAPERS FIFTY YEARS AGO**

The complaints of newspapers about the increased cost of newsprint and predictions of the direful consequences of still further rise in price remind us of the momentous revolution in journalism that has taken place in the memory of many who are still living.

In the early part of the nineteenth century there was in England a system of finance which was intended to severely repress popular journalism. A stamp duty was imposed with the avowed object of preventing the growth of "seditious newspapers"—that is to say newspapers advocating any sort of popular reform. Then there was a tax of six pence on every advertisement in the newspaper. And the last was a heavy duty on the paper material itself. The distinct and avowed purpose of all these imposts was to make it difficult for anybody but a capitalist of great means to produce a newspaper at all.

In his financial scheme of 1860 Mr. Gladstone announced that the Government had decided to abolish the duty on paper. The proposition met with the strongest kind of opposition and when it finally passed its third reading the majority in the House of Commons had dwindled to nine. The House of Lords rejected the bill altogether, as they held to make paper cheap would be to flood the country with abominable newspapers spreading everywhere doctrines of anarchy—that is papers voicing the people's claims and menacing the prerogatives of the all-powerful privileged classes. This brought on a constitutional crisis, as the rejection of the bill by the Lords was equivalent to the reimposition of the duty, an assumption of the taxing power which belonged exclusively to the Commons. However, the Lords bowed before the storm of popular indignation and passed the bill the next session.

It is a little hard for us to realize that the oligarchy which had ruled England since the Reformation held down to times so recent a power so nearly absolute. The march of democratic progress since then is measured by the epoch-making Parliament Act, the passage of which the Irish Nationalist Party was largely instrumental in securing.

The foregoing facts suggest some considerations which make it easier to understand the bitter, implacable hostility of the Die-hard wing of the old order to the Irish Party, and render intelligible their shameless attempts during the whole course of the War to drive the wedge of racial distrust between the democracies of the two islands.

There is good reason to hope that their malignant efforts will end in utter failure.

**THE CATHOLIC SAILORS' CLUB**

We gladly make room for the following letter which explains itself. It can hardly fail to enlist sympathy and cooperation for the truly fraternal charity which provides, in a measure, the wholesome influences of a Catholic home to—for the time at least—homeless Catholic sailors. To the Editor of CATHOLIC RECORD: The recent campaign for the British Sailors' Relief Fund has awakened Canada to an increased interest in the good work done by sailors. May I direct your readers attention to the work done by the Catholic Sailors' Club of Montreal since 1893.

This institution is the pioneer of the modern movement, for Catholic Seamen, in the world. While it is in Montreal, this being a port for Canada, this club deserves the support of many who have crossed the ocean or who are benefiting directly or indirectly from the commerce borne by the ships the Catholic sailors on them man.

The Montreal institution has been hard hit by the War and the little money we were saving for a new and more commodious building is dwindling. Perhaps there are some who would like to show their interest in our sailors by helping on an institution on this side, and by sending their subscriptions, thus becoming members of this club. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned.

W. H. ATHERTON, PH. D. Catholic Sailors' Club, Montreal. Montreal, Nov. 1st, 1916.

**OUR TEACHERS AND OUR LITERATURE**

We attended recently a teachers' convention. It was indeed very interesting, a splendid place to study human nature at its best. There were the usual addresses by veteran pedagogues and public men, and some talks by members of the association on technical phases of their work; all of which was up to the mark. We would have liked, however, to have heard from that rosy-cheeked, hazel-eyed little lady that teaches back on the tenth concession, Or from that clean-cut youth with the studious brow, who is almost a curiosity by reason of the rareness of his type. We are sure that if they were given an opportunity to speak out in meeting, they would have favored us with something interesting and original. Whoknows, mused we, but in that assembly was "some mute, inglorious" Burke or Shelly, some Francis Thompson or Adelaide Procter. This train of thought prompted a suggestion, which we will take occasion here to set before our readers.

It goes without saying that at the present time little of abiding worth is being added to our literature. True it is that some interesting and well-written historical compendiums have been recently produced, but very little popular literature that will ever be stamped as classic. If

we are looking for prospective authors, there is no place where they are more likely to be found than among a body of teachers. Many of the writers, who have contributed in the past to Canadian letters, have been teachers. Nor was this a mere coincidence. Their apprenticeship in a rural school served as an excellent preparation for their literary work. No doubt there are among the teachers in our country to-day many who would be capable of adding something of worth to our literature, if they could but find a suitable medium of expression. The daily press is scarcely such; nor are our magazines. Even those among the latter that are Canadian in name or pretensions are far from being that in reality. The educational journals are also out of the question. We know of but two of them, "The Canadian Teacher" and "The School." The former is almost wholly devoted to professional information. The latter, which is edited by the Staff of the Faculty of Education, Toronto University, is also largely technical in scope. We can see, in imagination, some of our lady teachers burning midnight oil and devouring the article on "The History and Development of Vulgar and Decimal Fractions." A literary article which appeared in the same number and entitled "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" stamps the last named magazine as unfit to be admitted into a Christian home or school. Here is a sample of Omar's philosophy of life:

O Threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!  
One thing at least is certain—This life lies;  
One thing is certain and the rest lies lies;  
The Flower that once has blown forever dies.

A Moment's Halt, a momentary taste Of Being from the Well amid the Waste—  
And Lo! the phantom Caravan has reached  
The Nothing it set out from—Oh, make haste!

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-Garment of Repentance fling;  
The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

Ah, My Beloved, fill the Cup that gleams  
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears;  
To-morrow! Why, To-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

In other words, "Eat, drink and be merry: to-morrow we die." This was bad enough, but the writer caps the climax by concluding with the naive remark that "This is in fact nothing more or less than the poetry of Agnosticism, which fortunately we in the twentieth century may read and enjoy without having our faith in the Divine order of things in any wise disturbed." May you? God help the teachers that drink from such a poisoned spring!

A very practical solution of the difficulty would be the publication of a Canadian literary monthly or quarterly magazine, not by professors with handles to their names, but by those of the rank and file of the teachers, whose minds have not been poisoned by scepticism and who have still music in their souls. Three or four competent members could be appointed who would select from the contributions forwarded to them, those that they deemed appropriate and of sufficient literary merit to warrant their insertion. All purely shop talk should be excluded. The menu might consist of leading articles or editorials, short stories racy of the soil (not the kind copyrighted by the Cosmopolite), historical essays dealing with events in Canadian history, poetry, a social page to keep the readers in touch with their old school friends, and lastly a wit and humor column gleaned from the teacher's experience with pupils, parents and trustees.

We are convinced that such a feast would be enjoyed not by teachers alone but by a large body of discriminating readers. The ambition to gain admission to the pages of the magazine would prove an incentive to many a bright young teacher to put forth his or her best endeavors, and would be a means of enabling them to spend profitably their leisure time. Incidentally too—and this is the point that prompted our suggestion—it might be the means of revealing and developing some latent genius; of revealing him to a coterie of readers who would be quick to perceive and appreciate talent. It

has been through just such mediums as this that some of the greatest authors in our language were first brought into prominence.

Of course, we know that there are practical aspects to this proposition that may possibly present difficulties, but these are not insurmountable. The matter of fact man may dub the idea quixotic and say that we are advocating a school for dreamers. Be it so, the dreamer lives for ever and the penny-a-liner dies in a day. It has been the dreamer and not the practical man that has done the most for the upbuilding of the race. Certain it is that our Canadian teachers should have it brought home to them that it is their duty not only to teach English Literature but to create and to foster a purely Canadian Literature, one that would be redolent of our May-flowers and our Autumn leaves, our rushing rivers and our boundless prairies; one that would reflect the aspirations and the mentality of the cream of our Canadian people.

THE GLEANER.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS**

ALTHOUGH by reason of the great War the name of Russia and the doings of the Russian armies have become very familiar these days, there is no country in Europe so little known to the average Canadian as the great Muscovite Empire. The common opinion one hears expressed about it is that it is a semi-barbarous nation, and that its people, still groaning under the tyranny of a merciless autocracy, are practically without God and without hope in the world.

AT THE outset of hostilities opinion was freely expressed that while by reason of her vast resources and her impenetrable winter barriers of frost and snow Russia could hold out interminably against the might of German militarism, yet that her unwieldiness and her characteristic slowness of movement prevented her at the outset from being an important factor in the War. Great Britain, it was said, would have to win the War, for while the Bear was waking from his long hibernation and slowly gathering his giant strength, France would be overpowered, Russia driven into her recesses, and Britain left practically alone to withstand the weighty arm of the Teuton. To what extent these prognostications have been falsified is now matter of history. Russia, like the Western Empires, gradually overcoming the handicap of unpreparedness, has shown that she is not only able to withstand the full force of German aggression, but capable also of carrying the War into the enemy's country. To what extent she is able to follow up her more recent successes the next six months will probably reveal to us.

IT HAS occurred to us that some remarks regarding the religious and economic conditions of the Russian people might not be unacceptable to our readers at this time—due regard being had to the limits of space at our disposal. And first as to their origin. There is a wonderful variety of race among them. Eighteen are named, but the principal, of which most of the others are offshoots, are the Finns, the Tartars, and the Slavs. The Finnish race is said by historians to have originally occupied the country which we now call Russia. Of the original incursion of the Slavs, little or nothing is known, but it is doubtless as old as that of the other Indo-Aryan races. It is recorded that they occupied the Danube, and that they were driven from it to the Vistula and the Dnieper by the "Volki"—probably the Romans, as early as the time of Trajan.

SOMEWHERE ABOUT the ninth century, when the Danes were over-running Western Europe, another horde of Scandinavians, called the Varangars, advanced into Russia along the rivers running from the Baltic. They came for purposes of trade, formed little principalities and spread over a considerable portion of what is now Russia. Modern historians say that the true beginning of Russia is to be sought at one of these Varangian principalities, namely Kiev, which, from its geographical position, more especially in respect to the rivers and tributaries, became the chief centre of trade, as well as a great place of military importance. Kiev was more or less acknowledged as the chief of the group of principalities surrounding it.

THE GRAND DUKES of Kiev and the neighboring Princes, however, frequently quarrelled and fought, and to this circumstance Russia owes another element in its population. These internecine quarrels laid them open to the Tartar invasion. This took place early in the thirteenth century. These Tartars were a nomadic race coming from Chinese Tartary, south of Siberia, and were subject to a Tartar race in the north of China. They took Kiev, destroyed it, and put its inhabitants to the sword; they ravaged the whole country, not with the intent of permanently occupying it, but for purposes of plunder and rapine. They exacted tribute and then largely withdrew. They even strengthened the position of the Princes and they respected the Russian religion, but they made Russia nevertheless into a mere Mongolian tributary. The effects of that invasion may be traced in even the Russia of to-day.

IT WOULD be a fascinating subject to trace the gradual development of modern Russia from this point, but that is beyond our present purpose. We turn rather to the conditions of the present. Mr. Maurice Baring, who wrote an informing book on "The Russian People" several years ago, describes the peasant as "naturally a good-natured being, humane and compassionate, but capable either of enduring or afflicting suffering under circumstances demand it, with unruffled calm." As to his food, he "feeds almost exclusively on black bread made of rye, and on a kind of porridge made either of buckwheat or millet, called *Kasha*." He very seldom eats meat, and on the diet described will work during the harvest in the fields for 16 hours at a stretch at an almost superhuman pitch—a circumstance that may well astonish the average Canadian who considers a meat diet indispensable as an antidote to the rigors of a winter climate.

THE SAME writer, while describing the mass of the Russian people as intensely religious, affirms that the educated professional middle class, and the intellectual middle class as "completely, frankly and carelessly atheistic." In this Russia has perhaps in the last half century or more but undergone the experience of Western Europe. Mr. William Palmer who visited Russia in 1840 and 1841, with a special view to studying the Russian Church, paints a rather brighter picture, though he does not disguise either from himself or his readers the low state of religious life prevailing among the secular clergy and the educated classes. He met, however, many men of deep and reverent piety, and in the monasteries, despite the limitations and exactions imposed upon them by the Government, an earnest effort on the part of many to realize the purpose of their calling. The absolute control of the Church by the State, was indeed, in the main responsible for the evils under which it suffered, and in this, the Russian people are no happier today than they were then.

AN INTERESTING circumstance arose out of Mr. Palmer's visit to Russia, which extended over a period of about twelve months. He was an Anglican clergyman, closely associated with the Oxford Movement. Imbued strongly with the Branch theory, he conceived the idea of studying the Russian Church with a view to paving the way for closer relations between it and his own. On his arrival in that country, therefore, he expected, as a matter of right, to be admitted to communion in the Russian Church. Were not, he reasoned with himself, as so many Anglicans have done then and since, the Anglican and Russian churches but branches of the one Catholic Church, and he, as "a Catholic," therefore, entitled to partake of the sacraments in the one "branch" as well as in the other. The Russians, however, did not view things in that light. They extended every courtesy to him, and every facility for pursuing his inquiry, but the Anglican Church being indubitably Lutheran, they told him, he must first square himself with his own, the Latin Patriarch (the Pope) ere they could admit him to their altars or sacraments.

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