

The Catholic Record

Price of subscription—\$2.00 per annum.
United States and Europe—\$2.50.

Publisher & Proprietor, Thomas Coffey, LL.D.

Editor: Rev. James T. Foley, D.A.

Associate Editor—H. F. Mackintosh.

Address business letters to the Manager,

ed., etc., 50 cent postage stamps or Remittance

must accompany the order. Where Catholic

Record Box address is required send 10 cents to

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Each insertion 50 cents.

The Catholic Record has been approved

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editor of the Catholic Record:

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London, Saturday, April 2, 1921

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OVER LABOR UNIONS

Side by side in the newspapers last Thursday were two stories which must be read together in order to appreciate their full significance.

One of them is this cabled report of a speech by Premier Lloyd George:

(Associated Press Despatch)

London, March 23.—A bitter attack on Socialism was made by the Prime Minister in a speech at a luncheon today of "the new members of the Coalition group," as the participants in the luncheon party were styled.

"The military dangers which united the parties have disappeared," said Mr. Lloyd George, "but greater, more insidious, more permanent dangers still confront us. The great peril is the rise to power of a new party with new purposes of the most subversive character."

"It calls itself 'Labor'. It is really Socialist. It is tearing the parties to pieces on its way to fearing society to pieces. Those who are inclined to agree with Mr. Asquith and Lord Bentinck that the Labor party is a bogey should read the Socialist and Labor Press for a week.

Socialism is fighting to destroy everything that the great prophets and leaders of both parties—Unionists and Liberals—have labored for generations to upbuild. Parliamentary institutions are as much menaced as private interests, and the rule of class organization is to be subverted for them.

Those still inclined to regard the Labor party as a bogey should look at the bye elections of 1920 and 1921. The addition of four per cent. would put the Socialists in the majority, and there is a margin of 15 to 20 per cent. who do not vote.

"Suppose that by the working up of grievances the Coalition was defeated and the Socialists won a majority. They would not seek to remove these grievances, but would rip out the whole system of society."

It is not necessary to acquit Lloyd George of partisan bias, of exaggeration dictated by self-interest and party interest; bias and exaggeration doubtless there are. But that there is underlying truth in the charge is beyond question. The influences which the Premier represents as already dominating and controlling the activities of labor unions, and of directing their aims and shaping their policy, are real, active and organized influences. They may yet be struggling with sorer and more conservative forces; and the issue may be in doubt. But next year or next decade the forces of radical Socialism may be dominant and controlling; the evils which Lloyd George foresees and against which he warns may be present and actual.

If the sorer and more conservative influences in the ranks of Labor are not in the meantime strengthened, the menace of Socialism will have ceased to be a subject for academic discussion; it will be real and imminent.

Not alone in England but everywhere throughout the industrial world the same struggle is being waged between red radicalism and the restraining influences of conservatism.

The terrible fiasco made by Socialism—or in its name—in Russia has, for a time at least, pretty effectively stemmed the dangerous tide in other countries. Lloyd George may be the astute politician playing on the fears of conservative England, he may be exaggerating as is his wont; but he is not merely beating the air. He knows well that there is an element of real danger to society in the Socialistic tendencies of Labor Unions. And he knows that multitudes are more or less keenly aware of that danger.

Now turn to the other story. It is a report from Ottawa of an outspoken warning by the Minister of Labor to

a deputation from the Catholic Labor Unions of Quebec that racial and religious strife may be the possible outcome of the Catholic labor movement in Quebec. The deputation submitted a program of legislation. The item which provoked the Minister's warning was a request that the Catholic Unions be given representation in the building trades conference to be held in Ottawa on May 3rd.

"If it once gets in the mind of the people that in your Province for a man to get along in his work he must accept a certain religious guidance," he told Abbe Fortin, who acted as spokesman, "it will not be conducive to the improvement of relations between your Province and other parts of the Dominion."

"You have charged discrimination by the department against your union, yet you make it necessary for a member of your organization to be of a certain faith. What would be the result if the Methodists, say, in Ontario should band together and ask the employers to employ only Methodists?"

Abbe Fortin charged the department with recognizing only the international trade unions, despite the fact that the Catholic federated unions in Quebec numbered between 40,000 and 50,000 members. He urged that an equal consideration be given his organization, and contended that the Labor section of the Peace Treaty made such provision. Senator Robertson pointed out that the building trades conference had been organized by members of the international unions and of the builders; consequently he could not dictate to either party that a third party should be admitted.

He explained that the provision in the Peace Treaty was that each country should recognize associations of employers and associations of Labor, which would give each class the greatest representation. In Canada these organizations were, respectively, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress.

Now on the face of it there seems to be a very real difficulty here if things are as Senator Robertson intimates. And, so far as the report shows, the spokesman for the Catholic Unions said nothing to clear up that difficulty.

On the one hand we have the recognized fact that dangerous tendencies, subversive of organized society, are striving for the control of Labor Unions. To counteract these tendencies, the Catholic Labor movement in Quebec has sought the most effective of all influences—the influence of the Catholic religion on Catholic workers.

No one, on the other hand, can find fault with Senator Robertson's stand on the question if, as he evidently implies, the Catholic Labor movement works injustice to non-Catholic workers of Quebec. The enviable record of justice and generosity of French-Canadians toward their Protestant fellow-citizens inspires the belief that means may be found to preserve the sorely needed influence of religion over the activities and aims of Catholic Labor Unions, without in any measure infringing the rights or injuring the prospects of the non-Catholic workers of the province.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Petitions for the commutation to imprisonment of the death sentence of Norman Garfield for killing Ben Johnston, proprietor of a Woodstock restaurant, will be placed in circulation in London this week, according to E. M. Westland, who stated to The Advertiser, that he is opposed to capital punishment and believes further that Garfield did not intend to kill his victim.

"Garfield's crime was accidental," said Mr. Westland. "We do not attempt to condone his intended crime of robbery, but the crime of murder was not deliberate on his part. To my mind, it is a far greater crime for society as a whole to be guilty of a deliberate execution. It is another murder, and a murder in cold blood."

J. B. Wright, a member of the London Board of Education, was mentioned by Mr. Westland as another member of the committee which plans to place the petitions for clemency for Garfield in circulation here at once.—The London Advertiser.

The news item quoted above, together with the facts and assertions contained therein, calls for consideration.

The wisdom of capital punishment may be called into question, and as a matter of fact there are those, sane and well-balanced, who advocate its entire abolition.

That is one thing. But it is quite a different thing altogether to assert that infliction of capital punishment is the chief object in all legal punishment. And the need for such deterrent influence is made plain by the epidemic of crime that has recently swept over the province.

In the circumstances interference

with the course of justice is particu-

larly ill-advised and we trust that our readers will not be misled into signing petitions asking for such

interference.

mutation of sentence and canvas for signatures on such grounds is mischievous. The influence that such individuals may have over the immature, the ignorant, the half-educated, is the measure of the harm done. To lead people to believe that the laws of Canada sanction and prescribe "murder in cold blood" will certainly not tend to allay unrest and discontent, or promote respect for lawful civil authority or confidence in the impartial administration of justice.

"Garfield's crime was accidental," said Mr. Westland. "We do not attempt to condone his intended crime of robbery, but the crime of murder was not deliberate on his part. To my mind it is a far greater crime for society as a whole to be guilty of a deliberate execution."

The abnormally developed egotism of this officious gentleman gives him a wonderful self-assurance. What he believes becomes a demonstrated fact or an incontrovertible doctrine; what he disbelieves has no existence. Others may labor under illusions, he has none. He has searched the heart of Garfield and he knows that the conviction and sentence for murder was all a mistake; worse than a mistake, a crime far greater than that of the convicted murderer. Judges, lawyers and juries can infer the intention only from overt acts. Garfield and his brother attempted to rob a peaceful, law-abiding citizen. With a loaded revolver in each hand Garfield covered this unfounding man while his brother busied himself with securing the loot. Had Johnston quietly submitted to be robbed; had he given the criminals ample time to make their escape, there would have been no object in shooting him. But when engaged on a criminal undertaking a man takes the life of another that killing is murder. That is the law. And that is quite in keeping with the natural sense of justice and equity that, even more than the law, guides the twelve honest men who compose the jury in such cases.

Since Garfield was found guilty and sentenced we read in the newspapers of a negro who was found guilty of brutally murdering a young white girl. So judge and jury decided through the negro when committing his cowardly and criminal assault had no intention of committing murder. The very same principle of law held and was applied in this case as in the case of Garfield. The negro was engaged in a criminal act and the killing that resulted was murder. In neither case would the innocent victim have been murdered had the unjust aggressor not thought it necessary to save his own guilty skin.

Then if Mr. Westland is so absolutely certain that "Garfield's crime was accidental," would he explain why he covered his victim with loaded revolvers? Had he had very real objection to the commission of murder in the pursuit of his unlawful trade, would not revolvers unloaded, or loaded only with blank cartridge, have served his purpose?

All these things are taken into account by the framers of our criminal law, by the judge who interprets and applies it, by the lawyers who strenuously defend the accused, by the jury. And after full and fair trial, no reasonable doubt being established, the criminal gets his deserts according to the law of the land and the due process of administration of justice.

Instead of Tremblay-Despatises let us substitute Jones Smith. John Jones married Mary Smith say in 1900. After they have lived together for twenty years it is found that John Smith was previously married to Jane Brown by whom he had three children. At the time of his second marriage Jane Brown was still living and no divorce had ever been secured. Now his legitimate children—the issue of Jane Brown his lawful but deserted wife—bring suit in the civil court to establish their right to inherit John Smith's property. The civil court is obliged to declare the second marriage null and void. For the civil law in Canada does not—as yet at any rate—recognize that a man may have two legal wives at once.

The ecclesiastical courts do precisely the same thing when it is found that according to the provisions of Canon Law, the parties to a matrimonial contract are not free to marry again.

THE WORSHIP OF THE STATE

By THE OBSERVER

In a recent issue of The Farmers' Sun, I find the following letter:

A STATE-EDUCATED RACE

Editor, Farmers' Sun:

To my mind the duty of educating

the race should devolve upon the State; in other words, our aim should be a State-educated race.

Education is the foundation of our social, religious and economic life,

THE SUPREMACY OF THE STATE IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS

The following extract from a letter to the Globe shows how persistent is Protestant misconception of the Catholic position with regard to marriage:

To the Editor of The Globe:—The amazing statement made by Mr. J. McFortune, that the ecclesiastical marriage did not "annul" the Tremblay-Despatis marriage because "there was no marriage to annul," proves my main contention. The highest tribunal in the British Empire has declared that the Tremblay marriage was valid and that the Roman Catholic Church tried to "annul" that marriage. The Roman Catholic Church has no right to appeal to Protestants for support until she officially admits the supremacy of Canadian civil law.

If marriage be considered as purely and merely a civil contract, then, of course, the writer's contention is well founded. The validity of the contract would depend on the conditions laid down by the civil law. Then the kaleidoscopic unions, dissolutions, reunions in the United States—in many cases differing little from the trading of wives amongst some savage tribes—become marriages that our friend would have the Catholic Church regard as the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. Nay, more; in Turkey we should be compelled to regard the keeping of a harem as a perfectly legitimate form of marriage, because the civil law legalizes it.

For, be it remembered, the State, as such, has precisely the same authority, precisely the same right to be "supreme" in the matter of marriage, in Turkey as in Ontario. Protestants may refuse allegiance to the Catholic Church. That is their right. But before criticizing adversely the position of the Church on marriage or on any other question, reason and common sense, as well as the amenities of civilized life, demand that they should inform themselves of that position.

Marriage is a civil contract with civil consequences, and as such comes, and must of necessity come, under the provisions of the civil law. All Catholics concede that.

But Christian marriage is also a Sacrament instituted by Christ, and as such, is exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. No Catholic can yield a jot or tittle of this claim to Ontario, to Turkey, to the United States—not to "the highest tribunal in the British Empire." The "highest tribunal" by the way, should be the "highest civil tribunal," proper terminology would conclude to clearness of thought.

Neither in the Tremblay-Despatis case, nor in any other case, has the Catholic Church ever annulled a valid marriage. After investigation if the marriage is found to be null and void from the beginning a declaration of nullity is judicially pronounced. That is poles apart from annulling a marriage. So far as the legality of a marriage before the civil law is concerned the ecclesiastical courts never presume to decide. That is a matter for the civil courts. The ecclesiastical courts decide solely on the Canon Law of the Church governing the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Instead of Tremblay-Despatis let us substitute Jones Smith. John Jones married Mary Smith say in 1900. After they have lived together for twenty years it is found that John Smith was previously married to Jane Brown by whom he had three children. At the time of his second marriage Jane Brown was still living and no divorce had ever been secured. Now his legitimate children—the issue of Jane Brown his lawful but deserted wife—bring suit in the civil court to establish their right to inherit John Smith's property. The civil court is obliged to declare the second marriage null and void. For the civil law in Canada does not—as yet at any rate—recognize that a man may have two legal wives at once.

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Education is the foundation of our social, religious and economic life,

it is, or should be, the duty of the State to see that every child receives proper education in whatever trade, calling or profession he or she showed the greatest aptitude.

Under our present system, poor people with large families very often find it a real hardship to give their children a very meager education; while among these children there may be many capable of great things in life if they had the opportunity and proper environment for the development of their faculties. On the other hand, the rich man with an only child finds no financial burden in giving his child the full benefit of a thorough education.

By our present system of education many bright and able minds are lost to the world, through force of circumstance, while many others have failed utterly, by being allowed to follow some trade or profession for which they were entirely unsuited.

By a State-educated race, every one would, or should, be required to follow the trade or profession for which he could best qualify. Such a system would tend to produce a race of specialists, would greatly lessen the number of failures in life, and would give all minds of equal capacity the same opportunity to develop and excel.

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