

RELIGION ON THE BATTLEFIELD

In the New York Tribune, for August 5, there appeared a thoughtful and many ways a very consoling article on the growth of religion on the battlefield. In the course of his reflections, which are based for the most part on what Protestant chaplains have written on the subject, and have little bearing on conditions among Catholics, Mr. William T. Ellis points out two phases of current religious experience of which the first must be very familiar, and the second very startling to non-Catholics. He says:

"Old usages and old creeds seem to have succumbed to the U-boats or some other force on the way over. All things, from the very existence of a Supreme Being to the right of a church to exist, have had to face the challenge of this new, emancipated, free-thinking, audacious war mind. This statement comes as a surprise to no one who has followed for the past decade or so the trend of religious thought outside the Catholic Church. Sincere belief in the Divinity of Christ and the Divine obligation of accepting whatsoever He taught, has long been a desideratum in the attenuated forms of Christianity preached from many Protestant pulpits. Careful observers have long noted two currents: one towards Catholicism, and the other towards atheism, agnosticism or some comfortable substitute for revealed truth, such as Theosophy or Christian Science. It is no wonder that these two movements should have been accentuated by the stress of the war."

"The one religious body in Britain, aside from the Roman Catholic Church, which has made definite progress during the war is the Roman Catholic Church. Interviews with its leaders, clerical and lay, show that the Church is not holding its own with its own members and special prayer services for the soldiers are usually well attended, but that is also winning hundreds of converts from the non-Catholic population. Especially among military officers have the recruits come to the Catholic Church. The priest who has most conspicuous success as a missionary to non-Catholics tells me that these men want to be spiritually right before they go to the front—or, in a significant number of cases, before they return to the front. They covet the sure word of the Church."

"It is only natural that the grim realities of war should sweep away the mists of obscurity, the miasma of old habits, family and racial prejudice, and the soothing fallacies of social environment. Brought face to face with the prospect of death, men think honestly in the clear light of truth. Self-deceit, temporizing, and sham lose their power over souls, made sublime by heroic sacrifices. Thus far, therefore, it is easy to follow the article in the Tribune."

But what about the opinion of those many British clergymen, who, according to Mr. Ellis, declare "that this war will reintroduce the churches of the Reformation to the Eucharist, to the crucifix and to prayers for the dead"? That the churches of the Reformation, as organizations, will return to the Faith of their Fathers, even the most sanguine will not dare hope; for the price, submission to Rome, is too heavy for them to pay. Individual members of those churches, however, are meeting the spectacle of Christ on the Cross at every turn in France; fervently, though it may be furtively, they are praying for their dear dead, because they cannot stifle the cry of their hearts; the consolation and strength derived by Catholics from the reception of the Holy Eucharist and attendance at Mass are to many of them matters of holy envy. It is no wonder, then, that conversions are numerous and on the increase; but it is individual souls, not official church bodies, that are turning towards the staples of Catholic belief. The fields are white to the harvest, only the workers are few. Chaplains, more Catholic chaplains, are the need of the hour.—America.

ARTHUR BRISBANE ON THE CHURCH

WELL KNOWN WRITER PAYS TRIBUTE TO CATHOLIC DEMOCRACY

Arthur Brisbane, who receives more than a half million dollars a year for writing editorials for the Hearst newspapers, had a very interesting article on Catholic Democracy in the American last week. Mr. Brisbane is not a Catholic, but his views of the Church always commend Catholic attention. The article is as follows:

"Cardinal Farley, of New York, whose health has caused anxiety, is improving. Welcome news to millions. To the citizens of any religion, or none, Cardinal Farley, apart from high personal character, is interesting as proof of the fact that democratic government is the most successful in religion as well as in the State."

"Cardinal Farley, born poor, has risen by his own ability and merit to the highest rank, but one, in the oldest Christian Church. In this he typifies the Catholic democracy that interests the student of history."

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH  
"Religions and rulers have risen

and fallen. The Catholic Church has gone on powerful, from century to century.

"Empires and kingdoms, great families and dynasties arose and disappeared. Their control was left to the accident of birth. If the first-born male was a fool or a weakling, that meant destruction. "The Catholic Church never left leadership to chance. Not any first-born, but the ablest was elected. He was chosen by a body of well-trained men, interested in securing the ablest as leader."

"The method of electing Popes interests Americans because it is the method—it may be called intellectual democracy—favored by those that founded this Republic."

"Our forefathers had no intention of allowing every man to vote for an individual president. The plan, now in the Constitution, although disregarded in practice, was to have the masses choose superior men as 'electors' and leave the choice of President to that superior body, as the Catholic Church leaves the selection of Popes to the College of Cardinals."

"You recall Bismarck's famous words: 'Nach Canossa gehen wir nicht.' ('We are not going to Canossa.')

"That takes you back almost nine hundred years to one of the great scenes in history—ending in triumph of the elected Pope Gregory VII. over the hereditary ruler, Henry IV., Emperor of Germany."

"The Pope summoned the Emperor to Rome to answer charges. The Emperor replied, deposing the Pope. That, he learned, was above an Emperor's power."

"The Pope excommunicated the Emperor and notified him that on a certain day, unless he should publicly repent, he would cease to reign."

"The Emperor's subjects, even his servants and courtiers, fled from him as from the plague when the ban of the Sovereign Pontiff was announced. All the imperial power vanished."

AT CANOSSA  
"The Pope was in a castle of Canossa, among the mountains of Modena, in Italy. There appeared the Emperor, who had crossed the Alps in the winter, and, clad in a penitent's garb, stood barefoot in the snow, knocking humbly at the gate."

"Three days in atonement he returned to the same place, standing alone, barefoot, in the snow all day, eating nothing, lonely and humiliated, between the high palace walls."

"The fourth day, January 25, 1077, the Pope admitted him to his presence, accepted his apologies and allowed him to continue as Emperor, after he had sworn to obey the commands of the Church."

"This great scene many artists have painted. Each painting illustrates the power of democratic rule, compared with autocracy. The Pope had back of him the spiritual support of the people, as democracy today has the people's political support."

"And the Kaiser will find, in spite of Bismarck, that Prussia will go to Canossa—a new Canossa, where the Kaiser will find Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau waiting for him instead of Gregory VII., who received the old German ruler."

"Brvo, investigator of Prussian atrocities and recently British Ambassador to this country, says of the Canossa incident:

"That one scene was enough to mark a decisive change and inflict an irretrievable disgrace on the crown so debased. "What better work could the Popes have done than demonstrate to the people the feebleness of kings and emperors and the limitations of their boasted autocratic power? "The work of humiliating kings was well begun when the old Bishop commanded the pagan French king before all his nobles:

"Bow the head, proud Sicambrian: adore what you have burned and burn what you have adored." "The task was nearly finished by Napoleon, who made kings ridiculous keeping them waiting in his anti-room, like lackeys."

"It will be a task neatly and completely accomplished by democracy when this War ends."

"The Kaiser is destined, if he lives a year, to hear Democracy's order: 'Change here for Canossa.'" Brooklyn Tablet.

DIED

FORAN.—At her late residence, 660 King Edward avenue, Ottawa, on Thursday, September 6, Alice M. Chisley, relict of the late John Foran, in her seventy-third year. May her soul rest in peace.

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Queen's Promise, The, by Mary T. Waggaman. The little heroine in this story, after being taken from her convent home by her uncle, an inveterate knight against everything Catholic, succeeds in finding an approach to his iron-bound house. She is finally reunited to her father, who is a victim of a storm at sea, and her way is opened to life, love and happiness.

Shimshades, by Mary T. Waggaman. Pip a boy of twelve, is lying at death's door, without hope of relief, in close, unwholesome city quarters. A black on the coast is noted, and there the father and his little boy, who is a millionaire twice over, for ransom. How the plotters are captured and the boy rescued makes a very interesting story, which is sure to please the young folks.

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