

shouted for bacon. On the grill the bacon was soon sizzling, and the air was filled with the appetizing odor. On the tea, and sugar, and condensed milk, and bread and crackers from our russachs, together with goat's cheese, potatoes and Indian meal pudding furnished by our host, we dined royally. The fatigues of the day were forgotten as we lit our pipes after supper and drew near the fire, for the mountain air was raw at night.

"This place, I again observed," said Carlton, "is well named the Porta Coeli. In the first place it furnishes that great requisite for world-worn souls, a splendid rest. I always picture Heaven as a place of rest. Just think of it—glorious rest!" "You always were lazy, Carlton," remarked Ben. "It seems to me that Heaven is going to be a place of glorious activity, of ecstatic enjoyment. I think that we shall never be tired, of travelling through the heavenly Jerusalem, of golden streets, and gates of pearl and walls of precious stones. And I suppose that if there should be any crevasse in the way, or a precipice, instead of having to make a detour, one can just fly across it."

"Hold on there," cried Carlton, snowed under, by the chorus of those who held for an active life after death. "My rest includes all that. I meant by rest that we should never feel tired, or sick, or ill; that we should never feel the pinch of poverty or the injustice of man. The atmosphere will be pure, and all the people there will be good and kind. Ben, who meanwhile had been very silent, now spoke up.

"I agree with Carlton in the rest idea. It will be a great thing to be free from all the ills to which flesh is heir. Just think what humanity will be, freed from temptation and from sin and from the stings of conscience. But what in the world ever started us talking about this subject?"

"That's easy," I answered. "Don't you remember the sign over the door, Porta Coeli? Ask our host what wrote it there and why it was written."

Carlton, turned to the man and translated my question into German. "We noticed that Porta Coeli is written over the door outside. I have a very curious friend here who would like to know, if possible, why it is written there." And he indicated me with his eye.

Our host turned and gazed at me fixedly for a few moments and then said: "I wrote it there myself. You are Catholics, are you not,—perhaps students from Innsbruck?"

"Yes, we are American students from Innsbruck."

"That makes it easier to explain," he went on, "because as Catholics you can understand. I wrote that because I found this place a veritable gate to Heaven. As you may have surmised, I am not of the Tyrol. I fled here to the mountains to get away from the haunts of men, for I came from a great city. I have a fair education, and I had a good position. But I made a serious mistake once. Do not mistake me gentlemen, I am not a refugee from justice, because the law would not hold me responsible for the mistake I made. I blamed myself however for that, and for many other things. I came here miserable and desperate. I had lost faith in God and man, and would have destroyed myself,—God help me,—had I not lacked the courage."

"I came here because it was a solitude, and here gradually my faith in God came back to me, and with it my faith in man. A man can be an atheist in the schools and among the haunts of man witnessing the daily crimes of misery of life, but a man cannot live in the mountains without regaining his faith in God. Little by little, I came to recognize the hands of God in the works of nature about me. The solitude of this retreat helped me to hear again the voice of God in my soul. I could not hear it in the roar of cities. I had stifled it purposely and persuaded myself that it was a delusion. I began to see that the delusion was self-inflicted. I saw the works of God in the eternal mountains, in the snow and the hail, in the sunshine and storm, in the thunders and lightnings. Then I came to hear once more His voice in my soul, and here I have felt that peace and rest which is a foretaste of the heavenly vision of God, when we shall see Him face to face. And because this place opened up the vision of heaven again to me, I wrote over the door, the words,—Porta Coeli. I speak thus frankly to you gentlemen because I know you are students and will understand."

"Thank you," said Carlton, "for your confidence. We will respect it, and I am sure we will try to bring home with us from the mountains the same beautiful lesson that they have taught you."

"After that, there was little more said, and we were soon stretched out on cots. I was so struck by the remark of our host, that in spite of my tiredness it was a long time before I got to sleep."

GENERAL INTENTION FOR DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

THE DECREE ON DAILY COMMUNION

The treasures of heavenly grace which are contained in Holy Communion and the rapid progress frequent communicants are known to make in the spiritual life, urged His Holiness Pius X. twelve years ago to issue an invitation to Catholics throughout the world to approach the Holy Table oftener, daily, if possible. In the Decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, dated December 20th, 1905, the Sovereign Pontiff declared that it was the wish of the Church, plainly set forth by the Council of Trent, that "at every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate not only spiritually by way of internal affection, but sacramentally by the actual reception of the Eucharist." He declared further that this teaching of the Fathers of Trent was merely an echo of the wishes of our Lord Himself who more than once pointed out to His disciples the need there was of feeding their souls with this Heavenly Food. "I am the Bread of Life," He told a multitude of Jews at Capernaum; "Your fathers did eat the manna in the desert and are dead; I am the Living Bread which cometh down from heaven. If any man eateth of this Bread he shall live forever." The Jews were amazed at His words and strove among themselves to know what He meant; and yet had they been free from prejudice they should have easily understood. The manna was the daily food their forefathers received in the desert as a gift from heaven, and our Lord's mention of it clearly indicated to the wondering Jews that the new Manna which He was to provide was to be the daily heavenly food of those who would live under the New Law. The Fathers of the Church all saw in the ancient manna a figure of Holy Communion, and they agree in their teaching that it is not merely the material bread which supports the body we should ask for when we recite the Lord's Prayer, but also the Eucharistic Bread which should be the daily nourishment of our souls.

The reason why the Church is so anxious to see her children adopt the practice of daily Communion is because she wishes them to live so that they may receive the great sacrament of the Eucharist worthily every day. She teaches that the Holy Eucharist, frequently received, preserves us from mortal sin, helps us to resist our passions and tendencies of character, and gives us strength to overcome our daily faults. The Council of Trent, in fact, called the Eucharist "the antidote whereby we are delivered from our daily faults and preserved from deadly sins." The Christians of the early and middle ages understood this doctrine and allowed it to flower in their souls; the daily reception of Holy Communion helped them not only to live saintly lives but even to submit to martyrdom. The fortitude millions of them displayed in the presence of torture and death testifies to the efficacy of this great sacrament. At the same time, however, when men's hearts grew cold; they wearied of this Heavenly Food just as the Jews in the desert wearied of the manna that was sent to them from heaven. Following the period of the Crusades a wave of lukewarmness and indifference rolled over the Christian world, a circumstance which culminated in the Revolt of the sixteenth century, and turned millions away not merely from the sacraments but from the true Church as well. A century later, Jansenism, a doctrine of extreme asceticism, fatal as it was in its inquisition, thus kept people away from the Holy Table not precisely through indifference or unbelief in the Real Presence, but through a false interpretation of the dispositions of soul needful for its reception. People stayed away from Communion because they thought themselves unworthy; they failed to perceive that the reception of this Gift of God was a means to an end and not the end itself; as a result human souls languished in spiritual torpor. The Holy See condemned Jansenist rigorism in the seventeenth century, but its effects have been discerned even in modern times. One has heard the echo of the spirit of that unlovely heresy in the infinite pains theologians took, however unwittingly, to gauge the dispositions of soul required for the reception of monthly, weekly and daily Communion.

With a stroke of the pen Pius X. did away with those subtle theological distinctions and brought back the practice of Holy Communion to the status it held in the early centuries of the Church. He renewed the teaching that the only dispositions required for frequent and daily Communion was (i) that a soul should be in a "state of grace," and (ii) that "a right and devout intention should be found in the communicant." Every one knows what the first disposition means; a soul is in a state of grace when it is free from the stain of mortal sin and when it is resolved not to commit sin again. This resolve, firmly adhered to, should gradually emancipate a soul from venial sin and from all affection thereto. A right and devout intention is present when a person goes to Communion "not through routine, or vain glory, or human respect, but for the purpose

of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him and of seeking in this Sacrament a remedy for his weaknesses and defects." This teaching shows us that the Decree of Pius X. which is still in vigor, is not merely disciplinary, seeing that it points out to priests a line of conduct in the direction of souls, but that it is also doctrinal, seeing that it treats of the Eucharist and of the conditions required for its reception, becoming thereby a guide for the priest of the faithful.

The multitudes who, during the past twelve years, have accepted this recall to the ancient traditions of the Church are witnesses to the efficacy of the Papal act. In the effects of frequent and daily Communion on their souls they have tasted how sweet the Lord is; they have felt that Holy Communion is a powerful preservative of the spirit of faith, of devout prayer, interior recollection, Christian detachment, humility, purity, meekness, and patience. It is a furnace of zeal, of fervor of charity; that it is the joy of penitence and sacrifice, the secret of peace of heart, the life and support of Christianity.

We need not be surprised, then, if Benedict XV. desires to see the practice of frequent and daily Communion spread more and more widely among his children over the earth. The world in these years is topsy-turvy; what with war and the horrors of war the age we live in requires some tremendous agency to set it right. It is only by turning to God and His Church and His sacraments that we may hope to see human affairs given their true orientation. If our hundreds of millions of Catholics throughout the world would approach the Holy Table frequently, their example would influence the rest of the human race. What other motive do we need to urge us, members of the League of the Sacred Heart, to do our own share in bringing about this happy millennium! And what consolation our efforts would give the Sacred Heart!

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

THE HEART OF FRANCE

A TESTIMONY TO MANY BRAVE MOTHERS

In this War, which is one of nations rather than, like the wars of old, of armies, the moral of the nation behind the firing line is as important as that of its army in the field. As Sir William Robertson has said: "It is a sifting of nations. It is a trial of character. It is a test of racial quality. . . . It is the fibre, the stuff, the grit, the nerve of the civilian people which will decide it. And be sure of this: the side which lasts longest, the side which endures, is the side which will give its character to the future of civilization. The quality of national fibre will decide this War, and decide the future of the world."

There is thus a plain duty on all, not only to hope and to keep a brave heart, but to do all they can to strengthen and encourage their men at the front. In this the women of France have been conspicuous. From the moment that war broke out all in France recognized that the struggle, long expected, was one of life and death, and the whole nation rose to meet the crisis with a spirit which, in spite of the initial success of the enemy and the efforts of the peace-monger, has never faltered.

It was easy perhaps to send off the troops in the days of mobilization with smiling faces and to the waving of hands; but in the dark days that followed, when the northern districts fell into the grip of the Hun and witnessed unimaginable cruelties, masses, and deportations, it was hard to cling to hope and bid others to hope, to carry on the tasks of daily life in the homes to which men would never return and to till the vineyards and the fields.

But it was done, as witness after witness has attested, and as the land itself proclaims. The shadow of war lay darkly on nearly every home; the pang of the lengthening separation and of the suspense, ended in only too many cases by news of the worst, was sufficient to daunt the bravest heart, but the women rose and remained true to their traditional spirit.

The wounded were nursed and cared for, the aged and the children protected, and the spirit of the men with the colors was kept strong by the knowledge that every trial was being bravely borne and every task fulfilled. If the men have shown themselves heroes, the women have no less proved themselves heroines, messengers of hope and apostles of patriotism.

The fight was for France, and for France they were willing to give all. Nothing could better summarize and embody this splendid spirit than the act of the young mother who, with her child in her arms, waited at the mairie for the casualty lists.

At last the names were posted up, and she learned that she was a widow. For a moment the knowledge of what it meant nearly overwhelmed her. But she gulped down her sorrow, and with a proud gesture lifted her child high above the heads of the women around her and exclaimed, "Vive la France!"

There we have, says the London Tablet, the secret of the strength shown by French women in this long and devastating trial. "Dieu et Patrie" is their motto, not on the lips alone, but in their hearts. How it has been fulfilled by acts as well as proclaimed in words is vividly shown in a book, entitled "Les Francaises et la Grande Guerre," by Mlle. Berthem-Bonjean.

A mother, hearing that her son has been wounded, can find in her heart to regret that he has thus been prevented from carrying on his duty as a soldier; and another young widow, on learning of the gallant death of her aviator husband, can write as follows:

"Thou knowest, O my God, how I

loved him, but Thou hast taken him in his glory after making a hero of him, and for that I thank Thee." Or take the following, from the letter of a young girl to her betrothed:

"There are certain things which must be made clear between us once for all. Not only do I permit you, but I order you not to spare yourself on my account. If a dangerous mission be offered you, take it without hesitation. . . . Anticipate a demand, if you think that others could not carry it out as well as you could. Always remember that you owe yourself to France; I only come along after her. . . . God forward, beloved, and may God guard you, if the country will not lose by it. Living or dead, you will be my only love."

Another letter from a young girl to her brother shows the spirit shining in the darkened home: "They have taken all. Of eleven at the War, eight are dead. Dear brother, do your duty—that is all we ask. God has given you your life and He has the right to take it. It is mamma who says so."

The same note of resignation and pride is continually sounding, as witness the following: "Our brother has fallen. We must not weep; he has done his duty, and his death was splendid. I send you a card; drink to his death as you would to his marriage."

As a last example, we may quote from a sister to her brother, who fell in the great offensive in Champagne: "I mourn with you over the friends who have fallen on all sides; but, you know, such sacrifices are necessary to obtain the triumph of our beloved France. . . . Heroes— and all soldiers ought to be heroes—are those who, if they cannot always do great deeds, at least always and everywhere do their duty."

In the light of such blazing evidence as this, one can understand how the women of France have shown themselves so staunch in the War and so constant in their encouragement to their men by the word and deed.

Where the men who had fought for France are concerned, disfigurement and loss of limb was no bar to marriage. At Nantes a league of young girls was formed, pledged to refuse their hand to a suitor. All this has been well sung by Pierre Chanel in his poem, "Francaises":

Nous ne devons pas, nous, c'est lâche! Amollir leur cœur et leur bras. A l'oeuvre ou la commune tâche Les attend tout armés—la bas ;

En passant le seul de leur porte, Il faut qu'ils sentent derrière eux La femme resoul et forte, Debout, l'orgueil seul dans les yeux.

Even still more noble is the attitude of mind of the women of maturer years, the wives of the men of France. Some of them have proudly inscribed at the end of the notice of death:

"Died on the field of honor: Vive la France."

The spirit is strikingly summarized in a sentence by a Lourdes laundress as she stood by the side of her husband as he lay dead of his wounds:

"He has given his life for France, and so done well. France was his mother; I am only his wife." These wives have in spirit followed their husbands in the daily dangers of the trenches, heartening them with loving assurances and words of comfort, though their own hearts were full of anxiety, thus proving themselves real comrades in arms.

"Keep nothing back from me for fear of troubling me," writes one. "I have the right to know your troubles as well as your joys, so that in closest unity we may suffer together before enjoying together the unspeakable happiness of peace."

Another, in a letter, the words of which are blurred with tears, seeks to comfort her husband's anxieties as follows: "Why, my darling, these presentiments of sorrow? You must no more doubt your return to me than you should doubt of France or victory. I, too, sometimes suffer heart anguish when I think of the awful dangers that surround you, but I have full confidence in God's protection, from the prayers which envelop you as in an impregnable coat of mail. . . . You speak of the mysterious designs of Providence. Well, with you I bow my head before His will."

And when the blow has fallen, the spirit is still the same. "I have been a widow for five months," writes one whose husband has fallen "for God and his country." "Nothing remains for me. But what am I saying? I have still my pride in him. And it is great. I assure you; for if my cross lies heavy on my shoulders, the name I hear makes me carry my head high." Or take these pathetic words of a poor working woman: "I am a poor woman who has never known the joy of giving. I know it now. I have given my all to France—my four sons." These things are at once an uplifting lesson to all, where they are not also a rebuke, and they recall and enforce the truth of that saying of Joseph de Maistre: "It is great hearts that make great countries."—Providence Visitor.

Swallowing whole the assertions made by great men is a cause of much moral indigestion. Some men, like a wet dog, sprinkle a shower of advice over you when you are least prepared for the bath.

FAITH A CATHOLIC CHILD POSSESSES WHAT WORLD'S PHILOSOPHERS ARE LOOKING FOR

By Rev. H. C. Hengel

Legislative assemblies still open their daily session with prayer, and secular colleges and universities still include in their commencement programs so-called baccalaureate sermons and religious exercises. These facts remind us of the time when all the nations of Europe, of which Americans are the descendants and heirs, were united in one Christian body, the Catholic Church, Church and State are now separated and ought to remain separated as long as the anarchy introduced into Christianity by the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century endures, but it is well that certain old customs, such as prayers in opening public legislative assemblies and baccalaureate exercises with their hint of religion have survived. As now perfunctorily conducted, these customs have little value for religion or Christianity, but they are souvenirs coming down from a glorious past when the Church shaped civilization and was the only promoter of education.

The only promoter of education, did I say? Yes, indeed! In obedience to her Divine commission to teach all nations, the Church carried on the education of Europe. In many respects her history is the history of education. She spread the gospel, she taught good morals, she refuted false and pernicious doctrines tending to destroy society and civilization. In the pulpit, in the confessional, in the humble service of parish priest as well as in schools and universities she opened channels of education in the broadest and highest sense. She offered the preparation for the complete life of men both here and hereafter. All the great universities including Oxford and Cambridge were established by the Catholic Church, so glibly and viciously slandered by some men as the enemy of progress and education.

To-day her millions of children have on the first page of the Catechism a more true and more helpful philosophy of life than anything which the superficial, irreligious teachers can possibly offer. Catholicism appreciates the fact of creation. They are certain of the existence of God. They know that human souls are immortal.

In all this Christian knowledge there is a glorious democracy of the intellect. The most honored scientists, philosophers, and theologians are not more wished regards as final truth than the humble Catholic who knows his penny catechism.

The crown of education is orthodox Christianity. Only one institution teaches it legitimately and infallibly. Only one institution insists upon the whole of Christian truth and precept and that one institution is the Catholic Church.

In our Catholic faith we have the sum total of wisdom. It unifies all knowledge. It makes knowledge a reality instead of a mere dream. Through our Catholic faith we are already in possession of truths for which outsiders are groping so painfully and usually so unsuccessfully.

THE CHRONIC DISAPPROVER

"Have you ever met him? The gloomy, joy-killing individual whose chief mission in life is to disapprove of people and things in general. The chronic disapprover takes upon himself or herself to censure and criticize everybody."

"No one ever does a thing, be it great or small, that meets the full approbation of the chronic disapprover. In church the sermon is either too long or the ventilation is horrible. The altar decorations at Christmas and Easter are either too extravagant or lacking the artistic touch."

"The chronic disapprover is essentially self-centered and pessimistic. He looks at everything through blue glasses and he sees the whole world blue."—The Michigan Catholic.

You can often love your neighbor as yourself more effectively across a high fence.

"It is well to take counsel of one's pillow," said the editor when the clock struck eleven.

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