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LONDON, SATURDAY, O. T. 8, 1921

SEUMAS MACMANUS' NEW HISTORY OF IRELAND

Elsewhere in our columns we are publishing an appeal of Seumas MacManus for the support of our readers in regard to his new "History of Ireland." Those who have had the pleasure of hearing Mr. MacManus discuss Irish affairs or who follow his weekly Irish letters, will readily understand that he has the talent, the character and the perspective, needed to compile a courageous, serious, thorough, analytical and sympathetic history of the Emerald Isle. In this undertaking the author has received encouragement and approbation from numerous prominent personages. Among others Cardinal O'Connell writes about it:

"The true history of Ireland, that is to say, the whole truth about Ireland, is today, more than ever, a very necessary thing to know. Indeed, it is the very great question which stands before the English speaking world today.

"That is the work to which Seumas MacManus has set his hand. The positive good and blessed results from such a work, thoroughly well done, I believe will be incalculable.

"He has my most cordial blessing in his efforts to present such a work to an anxious and inquiring world."

We heartily endorse Mr. MacManus' laudable enterprise and recommend it to our readers, whom we feel certain, will be prompted to aid the good work and will write the author at once.

THE BENEFITS OF CONFESSION

The Dean of St. Paul's, London, England, Dr. Inge, has recently given expression to a wish which seems worthy of special notice. Like many more leaders of his denomination, he is disturbed by the serious features of modern society and the lack of influence of Protestantism in the direction of souls. To overcome this defect, he advocates that the clergy become competent physicians of the soul and experts, in what he calls, religious psychology. This is what he says:

"I should like to see in every town a highly-trained clerical consultant, to whom it should be a recognized thing that any sick soul should resort, as a matter of course, exactly as we consult a medical specialist. After a few years' experience, such a spiritual physician would have gained so much knowledge, so much skill in diagnosis, and so much judgment in prescribing remedies, that his value as a professional man could not be doubted by anybody. It is, of course, essential that there should be no hocus pocus about his methods; no pretences of possessing supernatural gifts of any kind. His treatment must be rigidly scientific, though the science would be that of a man who believes in the grace of God, in the value of prayer, and in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit."

In the true Church of Christ no such void is experienced for there are, in every truth, "in every town highly-trained clerical consultants" to whom "the sick soul may have recourse," namely the priests of the Church, who possess that power of absolving from sins which was conferred by Christ Himself on the

Apostles and their successors in the priesthood. Doubly qualified in virtue of the special grace of their order and also by the lengthy course of study of Moral Theology, preparatory to ordination, the priesthood of the Catholic Church, by Divine commission, fills the want which the Dean experiences in his own communion.

The wisdom of God in bestowing such power on His priests is manifest in the results produced by its exercise and in the way in which it responds to the cravings of the human heart. The effects of confession have been acknowledged by many of our separated brethren. Not, of course, that they have had any experience of such confession as is practised in the Catholic Church, but on those who have had such experience they are aware that such effects are produced; whilst the great gap in Protestant life caused by the absence of confession is brought painfully home to them.

The divine wisdom is shown in the provision made for the unburdening of the heart—especially in regard to matters which are the heart's own secrets and will not be communicated to anyone except under circumstances guaranteeing peace of mind and perfect security. It is shown also in the fact that God has associated the reconciliation of the sinner with an external rite of religion, and one, too, that bears a special stamp of divine authority. Repentance, however sincere, if locked up in the heart, can not breed the peace and tranquility experienced by the penitent when he hears words of absolution which fall upon his ears as though they had descended from Heaven itself. The divine wisdom is manifest also in the restraint put upon the sinner by the obligation of confessing his sins.

The sinner who comes to his confessor under the galling yoke of sin steps forth from the confessional with a delicious sense of breathing the air of freedom. Peace and a sense of renewed hope and strength are the invariable feeling of those who have laid their burden at the feet of God's representative and have come away with a moral assurance of reconciliation with their Maker.

The feeling of a Catholic after confession has not altogether escaped the notice of our Protestant friends. An eminent Protestant, Leibnitz, famous as a philosopher, a jurist, and a theologian, discourses, in his "Systema Theologicum," on confession in a strain which might easily be mistaken for a chapter from some Catholic author.

"Assuredly," he says, "it is a great mercy on the part of God that He has given to His Church the power of remitting and retaining sins, which she exercises through her priests, whose ministry can not be despised without grievous sin. Nor can it be denied that this is an ordinance in every respect worthy of the divine wisdom; and if there be in the Christian religion anything admirable and deserving of praise, assuredly it is this institution, which won the admiration even of the people of China and Japan; for by the necessity of confessing, many, especially those who are not yet hardened, are deterred from sin, and to those who have actually fallen it affords great consolation; inasmuch that I regard a pious, grave and prudent confessor as a great instrument of God for the salvation of souls; for his counsel assists us in governing our passions, in discovering our vices, in avoiding occasions of sin, in making restitution, in repairing injuries, in dissipating doubts, in overcoming despondency, and in fine, in removing or mitigating all the ills of the soul. And if in the ordinary concerns of life there is scarce anything more precious than a faithful friend, what must it be to have a friend who is bound, even by the inviolable obligation of a divine sacrament, to hold faith with us and assist us in our need? And although of old, while the fervor of piety was greater than it is now, public confession and penance were in use among Christians, nevertheless, in consideration of our weakness, it has pleased God to make known to the faithful, through the Church, the sufficiency of a private confession made to a priest; and on this communication the seal of silence is imposed, in order that the confession thus made to God may be placed more completely beyond the reach of human respect."

FAMINE STRICKEN RUSSIA

The discussion as to the causes of Russia's plight have for the time ceased; and now only the poignant cry of Russia herself is heard. It is uttered in one Russian word "pomoshch," which means "help."

The highly-colored reports of the famine raging in Russia, which have hitherto reached this country, are the sober truth and present the picture of a great population dying horribly, too listless and apathetic from its long starvation even to rebel against its death, too resigned or enfeebled even to steal the food which for a short time at least might stave off death.

War, plague, pestilence, disease and famine have been preying upon a people who, as the door is opened, are found helplessly facing death by hundreds of thousands, and even millions. How widespread the suffering is it is not now possible even to estimate, though a dispatch from official health sources in Moscow puts the number of starving children alone at nine million.

Discussing the frightful conditions that attain in Russia, the Manchester Guardian says: "Our age and our European civilization have never known such wholesale death, and it is scarcely possible now that any relief which is offered can more than touch the fringe of the suffering. It will be the bare fringe only, too, if the politicians, Russian and non-Russian, bicker much more while the starving on the Volga die fast for want of food or, with the horrible food that alone is possible, die slowly. The more need, therefore, to render all support we can to the agencies which are actually at work supplying food and saving life in Russia."

The official famine paper, Pomoshch, published in Moscow, depicts conditions which are not simply distressful; they are catastrophic, without equal in history. It is not merely that people in certain areas have only bran, acorns, bark or grass for their daily bread; or that the fields here and there are burned and bare, where only death has reaped a harvest; or that cholera is so prevalent and virulent in a city of less than one hundred and fifty thousand that there are from six hundred to seven hundred cases in a day, with a mortality of 75%; or that locusts have in certain places devoured all that the drought has left. It is that conditions, of which such instances are given, are typical of whole provinces whose populations are fleeing by thousands and tens of thousands, as if the day of wrath had come.

It is not now the time to ask the reason why. In response to this cry of "pomoshch," that arises from Russia's woe, there can be but one answering word that can be understood, the word for that virtue which persists when tongues and prophecies and knowledge cease or fail or pass away.

Among the first to answer to that cry and raise his voice on behalf of the starving population of Russia, was our Holy Father, Benedict XV. Writing to Cardinal Gasparri, the Papal Secretary of State, His Holiness said in part:

"We are confronted by one of the most frightful catastrophes recorded in history. Incalculable numbers of human beings exhausted by famine and weakened by typhus and cholera are roaming desperately through an arid land, then streaming into the most crowded centers whence they are ousted ferociously by force of arms!

"From the banks of the Volga millions of men, faced by grim death in its worst form, cry piteously for help. These cries of anguish, Your Eminence, have touched Us deeply. Here is a people already tried to the uttermost by the scourge of war—a people marked with the sign of Christ—a people who have always ardently desired to belong to the great Christian fold. Although separated from Us by barriers several centuries have built up, the greater their sufferings, the nearer are they to Our heart.

"Your Eminence, We feel it our duty, notwithstanding Our own poverty, to do the utmost We can to help these children of Ours who are far away. But the greatness of the needs is such that all Nations should unite to come to their help; for no effort, however great, will cope sufficiently with the immensity of the disaster. We invite Your Eminence to use all possible means to persuade the Governments of the different Powers of the necessity of prompt and practical co-operation.

"In these years of woe, the Holy See, faithful to the great and sweet mission, entrusted to It by God, has more than once been heard among the nations entreating and admonishing. If once more then, We come imploring Charity when the echo of Our last exhortations and prayers has not yet died out, it is only because the new afflictions equal and perhaps even surpass the former sufferings.

"Meanwhile all the children of Christ's Church who are scattered over the earth, the rich and poor alike, when they give their offering for their brothers should, full of faith, lift up unto God their prayers that He may deign to succour us and end such a terrible scourge."

The Holy Father's appeal has been formally communicated to all members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See and also to all the Nuncios, Internuncios and Apostolic Delegates representing His Holiness in the various countries. These representatives of the Holy See have communicated with the several committees started in various localities to come to the help of the Russian people so as to apply the Papal initiative with the best possible results.

CAN'T BE BOTHERED AND HAVEN'T TIME

By THE OBSERVER

Not only is there no royal road to learning, but there is no easy road to anything that is worth having. We have in Canada a great country; we are only a few millions of people in a vast country of immense, and largely unknown, and unexplored resources. This is an easy country in which to make a living.

Up to the present, there has been little poverty in Canada. In a few of the larger centres of population, there is, from time to time, some unemployment, and some distress. These, however, affect only a small part of the population, even of those large centres; and even of those who are so affected, there are many who may call it their own fault.

Compared with other less fortunate peoples, Canadians have much to be thankful for; and if we manage our affairs at all prudently, there is no reason why we should not maintain the great advantages we have over the peoples of other countries who are crowded together on areas of ground which are very small when compared with our great, wide Canadian spaces.

But several things endanger the advantages we thus enjoy. One of them is the still-growing tendency to herd together in vast numbers in cities and towns. The few figures so far given out of the 1921 census, indicate an undue growth of cities and towns at the expense of the rural districts. I suppose the War and its conditions drew many thousands into the cities and towns, in excess of the ordinary downward flow which has been the course of population changes for many years past. To some extent that was, no doubt, unavoidable. The great impetus given to manufacturing no doubt occasioned an unusually strong flow of population into the towns and cities. And, as effect follows cause, and in its turn becomes the cause of further effects much of the present unemployment and distress may perhaps be thus accounted for. It is the old evil, with an unusual aggravation due to temporary conditions; the towns and cities have grown disproportionately fast.

Another thing which endangers our peculiarly advantageous natural situation, is the growing tendency to "take things easy," as the common phrase has it. Pope Benedict has numbered amongst the plagues which afflict the world today, the love of pleasure, and the dislike for work. The pioneers who laid the foundations of Canada, would surely be astonished if they could see the number of useful, and even profitable, exertions which their descendants dismiss with a careless statement that "they can't be bothered."

Those old pioneers thought themselves lucky if they got a chance to be bothered over matters which might ensure them the security of a good living. But nowadays, if some particular sort of work, though probably profitable, and though not very hard, seems to call for a little more than ordinary care and thought or time or attention, the happy, free and independent Canadian is very likely to tell you he "can't be bothered."

The old Irish folks of the last generation had a humorous but keen thrust for such persons as were always looking for the easy way: "He has a soul above slavery" they used to say. And we have in Canada today altogether too many people who have "a soul above slavery." "They can't be bothered." They want the line of least resistance. They have an inward conviction that they ought to get on well with a minimum of exertion; and, as it is in human nature to imagine that the other fellow has it easy and we have it hard, such persons are usually found to be full of reasons why something should be taken from someone else and given to them.

Then there are the people who "haven't time" There are many of these, and their number, unhappily for Canada, is constantly increasing. One danger which threatens to diminish greatly the natural advantages enjoyed by the Canadian people is, the enormous waste of time by our young people. There is a constantly growing demand for "time off" and the "time off" is, only too often, utterly wasted. No one who was a victim of the "no time" delusion has ever done anything in the world that was worth doing. The way to get on is to use time profitably; not to hurry and scurry through part of one's work, and neglect the rest, in order to have more "time off," to pass in doing nothing.

Rest, of course, is necessary. Reasonable amusement is necessary. But we are in danger of making amusement the chief end of existence. It is not necessary to see all the moving pictures that come to town. It is not necessary to cut an hour here, and an hour there, out of the regular business or working day, to go bumping in an auto over a poor road which we have bumped over a hundred and fifty times already.

Our young men should have more ambition. They should study; read seriously; try to make some use of the peculiar advantages they enjoy in this great country of small population.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE CATHOLIC TRUTH CONFERENCE held in Congress Hall, Montreal, last week, proved as we anticipated, a splendid success. The attendance was large, the quality of the papers and discussions high, and, what is of even greater moment, the spirit of the gathering enthusiastic and optimistic. Winnipeg was, we understand, fixed up as the place of the next Conference. Is it too much to hope that it may become an annual affair?

MUCH AMUSEMENT has been created by the story of a "stolen church" in British Columbia, which was surreptitiously removed from its original site in a deserted settlement and transferred on car and scow to a distant point. It was the property of the Church of England in Canada. Which fact should recall to reflecting Anglicans the innumerable "stolen" churches which, dotted all over England, stand reminders of the "Great Pillage" of the sixteenth century.

TAKEN IN conjunction with the impressions of a noted traveller in Spain as to the real character of the peasantry in that country, quoted in these columns last week, the experiences of a Canadian university man, writing from Paris, as to the home life of France, and quoted in a metropolitan daily, are instructive. "French home life," he writes, "is very simple and refined. I am afraid we in Canada have depended too much for our information and opinions upon the tourists who rush through France and do not see the real country or people at all." That, unfortunately, is true not in regard to France or Spain only, but to every Catholic country. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the entire traditional idea in that regard of the great mass of people on this continent, is based on just such shallow foundation. And the responsibility rests with those who should, if they would, know better. When shall they begin to unlearn?

A BAPTIST "Mission" in Toronto, erected through the instrumentality of an apostate Russian Catholic thirteen years ago, and acclaimed at the time as the instrument which would go far to Protestantize the

"foreign" population of that city, has closed its doors, and put its fittings into storage. The man himself, who is declared to have been highly educated, and of unusual ability, died five years ago. Since then the "mission" has led a precarious existence and having now ceased to exist may take its place among those "extraordinary popular delusions" which have marked the history of Protestantism from the beginning, and which live their little day and sink into oblivion. As for the Toronto Baptists, who espoused the unhappy man, they evidently, judging by the daily papers, have their hands full just now in saving their own skin.

THE CHIEF Methodist institution in Ontario, Victoria College, has had a windfall in the shape of a complete collection, numbering 60 volumes, of first editions of the works of John Wesley, and of books relating thereto. This will give the adherents of that body an opportunity of studying the man himself, and his writings at first hand, and of learning thereby how far removed from the ideals of its founder are those of the Methodism of today. It will also afford them an opportunity of becoming acquainted with John Wesley's peculiar ideas regarding the treatment of the multifarious physical ailments which afflict humanity—for Wesley wrote not on theological topics only, but on physical science as then conceived, on therapeutics, astronomy, and various other subjects.

IT HAS BEEN said of him, indeed, that his range of interest and of intellect seems to have acknowledged no horizon. We take leave to doubt, however, if there is one Methodist in ten thousand today who has any knowledge whatever of Wesley's peculiar ideas as to the treatment of disease, and there is a surprise in store for those who have sufficient interest in the man to give more than a cursory glance at the books on that subject in the collection now in Victoria College. John Wesley was unquestionably a spiritually-minded man, whose soul revolted against the worldliness and materialism of the Anglican Establishment of the eighteenth century, and tried his best to reform it. But the truth is the Reformation had left him a heritage which was too much for him, and, as his "medical" treatises witness, he was not proof against the recrudescence of old pagan superstitions which centuries of Catholic teaching had gone far to dispel, but which with the overthrow of spiritual authority, had come back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries like an Alpine avalanche. Let those who doubt this make themselves acquainted with his writings on disease.

AT THE meeting of the Presbyterian Synod of Toronto and Kingston, attendants were eloquently reminded that foreign missions are a great aid to Trade; that the missionary opens markets to the merchant and manufacturer of Canada, and that, therefore, it is to the latter's interest to support the missions. That was the great slogan of the "Business and Christianity" campaign, and the Laymen's Missionary Movement in the United States a few years ago. It has been an effective lever also in raising funds for the "evangelization" of South America. But did anyone ever hear of the Twelve Apostles, or of those who for centuries have followed in their footsteps, and carried the Gospel message into every quarter of the globe, appealing for help on such a plea? Rather have they reminded Christians that their treasure was not of this world. But we live in a new age.

PROTESTANTS MAKING AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN AROUND MUNICH

Berlin.—Reports from Munich state that at the present time many places in the vicinity of that city are being visited by envoys of various non-Catholic sects: Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, and Adventists, to mention only a few of them.

A favorite trick of the Adventists is to hold "missions" on the open squares of the towns and villages without mentioning the name of their religion. Tracts and writings are offered for sale, and when they are questioned concerning them they endeavor to convey the impression that they are Catholic and intend to further Catholic interests. Not until the very end of the "Mis-

sion" do the people who may have chance to attend learn the true identity of the promoters. The aim seems to be to attract Catholics to these meetings at any cost. Statements which have long since been refuted are revived and almost any means are considered good to win followers.

In Munich proper, where the population is overwhelmingly Catholic, the sectarians had the audacity to put up large posters insulting the Pope and insinuating that the Pope is really anti-Christ. Things reached the point where the Archbishop was compelled to issue an official warning against these religious agitators.

The preachers are men with very little education and culture and there is little probability of their making many proselytes. The archiepiscopal warning was designed to prevent their leading astray weak and credulous souls.

BOY LIFE

THE BOY AND HIS SPARE TIME

Adapted from J. S. Kirtley's "That Boy of Yours"

A boy has very little spare time, if he is left to arrange his own schedule. In fact, he will not find time for everything he wants to do. And he certainly will not have time if he does everything he is asked to do. But if a reasonable schedule is worked out for him, he will have enough time on his hands to follow his own bent and look after some of his urgent interests. He will be left to his own resources for a while each day. That is the spare time of which I am especially speaking. After a while he will be in charge of twenty-four hours each day, and he is now getting ready for that responsibility, by taking over a few hours at a time. If he can be helped to make a success of them, there is reason to believe that he can succeed with the whole twenty-four, by and by.

Part of his own time is apt to arrange for itself as he and the other boys drift into their plans for play and no one knows just how it is done. They gravitate together at certain times and places as naturally as blackbirds flock together in the autumn. But I am speaking of the time that is left to his own initiative, when he is out of school and through with his group plays and his chores, especially at the evening hour. Let us say he has three hours, more or less each day, which he can call his own,—exclusive of the Sundays. In one year it would make a great big slice of time for which he is more or less responsible. The fact must be faced, however, that, as he grows older, this is the most perilous time of the whole twenty-four hours—for three reasons. It is the time of day when temptation to all the forms of dissipation is most bold and brazen and persistent; it finds him more relaxed and less on his guard especially in the evening than at any other time of the day. It is the only time that he can call his very own and, in the mere deciding, it gives a new responsibility which reacts on his whole nature. He shows what it is to him, not so much by the way he does the tasks prescribed by another as by the way he prescribes his own tasks. If he is taught to use it rightly as a boy, his destiny is secure. He cannot be coerced, but the possibilities may be opened to him in a fascinating way by the recital of historical examples. It is surprising to find that many of the celebrated personages in the annals of history accomplished staggering results while yet in boyhood and these are the examples which have such a powerful, definite appeal to the boy.

Some of the spare time can be spent in play, especially in the twilight when he and the other boys get together on the lawn, or in the vacant lot across the street, for a wholesome game. The long winter evenings give a rare opportunity for a variety of things. Instructive play is one of the best things for him and the other members of the family. Fortunate for him if the older members of the family are playful as well as serious in their feelings and know how to give direction to the evening's enjoyment in the form of sympathetic and sensible advice and co-operation. He is always open for that kind of help, for it trains instead of denying his power of choice to him. The right of tactical supervision over all his time must never be surrendered.

When the games and readings are social they develop his sense of social responsibility and train him in