

The Catholic Record

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FAS EST ET AB HOSTE DOCERI

The Great War was yet young when it was felt that the easy-going and boastful optimism based on the theory of ever increasing human progress was an opiate dream. The Evolutionistic philosophy of life, the pernicious narcotic which induced this illusion, was shattered. "Christianity has failed" cried out, with unparalleled effrontery, those who had banished Christianity from the schools, from the universities, from the legislative halls, from their philosophy, and largely from the homes of Christian civilization.

Two years ago Army Chaplains belonging to the Established Church of England discussed with commendable frankness and moral courage the religious condition of the millions of Englishmen with whom as soldiers they had come into closer personal contact than ever before, and their testimony shows that for immense numbers of English people religion is something of a very vague and rudimentary character.

"The great bulk of the men appear more or less indifferent to the claims of religion. There is a certain shyness in speaking about it. But below the surface there is a real spiritual movement going on, though it would be a gross over-statement to say that any great revival of religion is in progress."

By "The Christian Church," as will become clear later on, he means those sects whose teaching of posi-

tive religion had become more and more vague and indefinite.

He goes on to say that there is a marked revival of faith in God's existence, but "this revival of faith in God does not manifest itself in any great renewal of the desire to worship Him," there is some revival of faith in prayer, and also of "faith in human immortality." This can hardly be called Christianity; but with religious instruction banished from the schools for more than a generation, with little or no definite religious instruction either in the home or in the church, with the very doctors in Israel disputing in the public prints over the fundamental facts of Christianity, the appalling ignorance of the basic doctrines of Christian revelation is not surprising.

Another Anglican chaplain tells that after giving instruction to some soldiers one of them said to him: "You are telling us things we ought to have learned when we were children."

The Archbishop of York, two years ago, summing up the impression derived from the chaplains' reports wrote:

"One cannot suppose that the multitudes of men at the front have gone through religious awakening. The chaplains' reports show appalling ignorance of the Church's Sacraments and faith on the part of great numbers of men, who describe themselves as members of the Church of England."

And a chaplain writes: "It is hopeless to find a Christian theory of life or any theory in the ordinary soldier. Many a time our scantily attended services stir one to indignant speech against the irreverence, spiritual indifference and carelessness out here."

The Rev. B. H. Berlyn served first as a chaplain of the Established Church in a large garrison at home, and later at the front. In the garrison he found that of 18,000 Church of England men only sixty took any interest in religious matters. At the front, in dealing with the sick and wounded, he found them utterly uneducated, and he was startled at the contrast between them and the Catholics. He found the latter crowding around their priests eager to receive the Sacraments and "knowing exactly what to do and what they expected their chaplain to do for them." He was impressed, too, with "the real Catholic spirit of the Church, the French, the English, the Belgians and even the German prisoners all receiving the same sacraments from the same English priests."

Mr. Berlyn became a Catholic and served later in the War as a combatant officer.

This is the testimony of another chaplain:

"The almost entire ignorance of the average soldier of the elements of religion, the paucity of confirmed men or regular communicants is simply appalling. A Roman Catholic soldier knows at once what to do. He knows the Gospel of Christ, understands about repentance, about grace. Our poor Tommy, not from any fault of his own, but from our neglect is quite unconscious of most of this as a reality."

The flippant and contemptuous references to dogma with which we are so familiar even from clergy-men who should speak as having authority are now seen in their true perspective. Dogma, which is merely the teaching of definite revealed truth, has made religion real to the Catholic soldier; the effect of the lack of such clear and definite teaching in the case of the Protestant soldier is now deplored by those who are most competent and in the best position to judge.

A Scots Presbyterian Member of Parliament gives this account of his experiences amongst the French at the front:

"I have seen regiments and battalions bowed in worship, silent congregations at all hours, prostrate in prayer and intercession. They were not moved to such devotion by any indeterminate, undenominational, new-fangled theories of a higher life. No, they were just practicing the religion taught them by their mothers or their village priests in their childhood, a religion based upon the most definite, the most dogmatic principles of the Incarnation and the Atonement. That was what they wanted in time of trouble. No shadowy substitutes, no compromises, would give them the courage they needed in the trenches. Under the shadow of the guns, or stunned with grief, they turned again like children to their mother's knee, and clasped in faith the outstretched hands of the Man of Sorrows."

What is the object of recalling these things? To boast of our success and gloat over the failure of Protestants? That were a mean and unworthy aim. And besides though,

in contrast with Protestants, Catholics are well instructed in religion; still Catholic chaplains tell us that too many Catholic soldiers show a lack of adequate religious instruction. Many of them had this lack supplied in the army. There is something for us, Catholics, to learn from the experiences above recorded. On thing that stands out is that definite religious teaching is necessary to preserve even the essential doctrines which God the Son became incarnate to teach mankind. And doctrine is the lamp to the feet of practice. This too is evident and outstanding. The Catholic school where religion pervades the very atmosphere surrounding Catholic childhood here receives its ample justification. Where possible the Catholic youth leaving the elementary school should not be plunged into an atmosphere of religious indifference on entering the secondary school or college, but continued in schools permeated by religion. Where this is impossible then there is a duty incumbent on all of us to see that the ignoring of religion does not produce the appalling results which the Anglican chaplains deplore. Where the Catholic secondary school or college is beyond the reach of Catholic boys care should be taken to counteract the negative influence of secular schools. That this can be done is proved in the most effective way possible by its being done in some places.

Then there is that very real part of the child's education which goes by the time honored name of the Catechism. The experiences of the War have proved to the hilt its importance and its efficacy. If from the testimony of non Catholics we feel only a self-complacent pride and satisfaction then we have not the humility to learn the lesson which the passages quoted above are intended to drive home. Speaking generally the teaching of Catechism leaves much to be desired; much that may be supplied by pastors, parents and teachers. It has been said that where there are separate schools the burden of the teaching religion to the young is shouldered off upon the Catholic teachers. Whereas the pastor and the parents are often more fully alive to their duty in this respect when the children attend a school in which Catechism is not taught.

There is doubtless a modicum of truth in the assertion. There should be no color of reason for it. The priest is the teacher of religion especially to the lambs of the flock. And fathers and mothers can never shirk their first and most essential duty to the children God has given them by sending them to Catholic schools.

The duty that the War experiences of Army Chaplains, both Catholic and Protestant, point out with stern emphasis to pastors, parents and teachers is the faithful, conscientious and intelligent teaching of the Catechism.

Many a scheme for the betterment of the world put forth by the prophets of progress and uplift and social service will have been relegated to the limbo of eloquent and vague enthusiasms when the seed sown in the teaching of the Catechism will bear fruit some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

IRELAND

In the democratic readjustment of the world will Ireland enjoy the right to govern herself, to determine her own destiny and direct her own national development? This is a question that many are now asking. We have not the slightest hesitation in the world in saying that the realization of Ireland's hopes is certain and inevitable; but that it will be immediate is another matter. The certainty, the inevitableness of such adequate measure of self-government as will satisfy the aspirations of the Irish nation follows inexorably from the principle which is now accepted by the civilized world that small and weak nationalities have the same inalienable right of self-determination as have nations howsoever great and powerful. That principle accepted must inevitably work itself out in universal application in all cases where the people are capable of self-government.

That there will be delay is almost equally certain. The present Government dominated by Unionists will do nothing toward settling the Irish question. Millions of Irish origin throughout the world are impatient of delay. Yet it may be all for the good in the long run. Had Gladstone's Home Rule bill of 1886 or

1893 passed into law and been carried into effect it is questionable if the benefit to Ireland would be at all commensurate with the hopes of Irishmen at home or abroad. One thing is certain with the restricted powers then proposed to be conferred the Irish Government could never have financed the gigantic land measure by which the ownership of greater part of the land of Ireland has passed from landlord to tenant.

In the debate a few weeks ago on T. P. O'Connor's resolution Mr. Ascurin Williams, whose labors on behalf of one oppressed nationality, the Armenians, entitled him to speak with authority on a question of this kind, said that he "believed that the Government would have to work out a settlement of their Irish question, taking as a basis the report of the Irish Convention, and if necessary to put troops in Ireland to impose that settlement on all recalcitrants." Even if these recalcitrants were confined to Ulster no sane Irishman could view with complacency such a solution of the Irish problem. The elections, if the number of acclamations may be taken as an indication, are likely to wipe out the constitutional party replacing it by Sinn Fein representatives. It is the undoubted right of the Irish people to do this if they deem it advisable. Constitutionalism, they claim,—and with reasons too convincing—has been killed in Ireland. By constitutional means Ireland won its constitutional right to self-government. Carson in the name of a small and arrogant minority flouted the constitution, defied the authority of King and Parliament and organized open rebellion. He was shamelessly and recklessly supported by the Unionists of England, the party of law and order, the party of sporting gentlemen who wished when they lost their bet. If Ireland's answer is Sinn Fein the law-and-order Unionists of England must shoulder their full share of responsibility for the outcome of their shameless lawlessness.

Time and more civilized spokesmen for the "dominant partner" will bring about conditions more favorable for settlement of the Irish question.

Millions of people are yet living on this continent who remember that civilized white men claimed that it was economically necessary and morally justifiable for them to work their cotton plantations with slave labor. So short a time is it since the claim of individuals to buy and sell, own and control, as absolutely as we own and control beasts of burden, other human individuals.

The time is not far off, if the whole world is not given over to Pharisaism, when the claim of one nation to own and control another nation will be as great an outrage to the world-conscience as the recent respectable institution of slavery.

"WOULD HAVE HAD NO COMMAND"

While London was giving enthusiastic welcome to Premier Clemenceau and Marshal Foch, the French Premier were told created a sensation by saying in reference to the Great Commander-in-Chief "but for me he would have had no command." And right there, in spite of the sensation that it vouched for, the cable became eloquently mute. Not another word, nor a word of explanation since.

Let us spell it out. Foch was no discovery of the later stages of the War. He was known as Europe's greatest tactician long before the War began. On Oct. 31st, 1895, Ferdinand Foch was made associate professor of military history, strategy, and applied tactics, at the Superior School of War, where all the higher officers of the French Army received their training. The next year he was advanced to the head professorship in those branches. That was in 1896. In 1916 speaking at dinner to the principal leaders of the government and of the army, Marshal Joffre declared that without the Superior School of War the victory at the Marne would have been impossible.

General Requin of the French General Staff, now of the French High Commission to the United States, in a recent number of the World's Work, writes: "Foch has been for forty years the incarnation of the French military spirit. Through his teachings and example he was the moral director of the French general staff before becoming the supreme chief of the Allied armies. Upon each one of us he has imprinted his strong mark.

We owe to him in time of peace that unity of doctrine which was our strength. Since the War we owe to him the highest lessons of intellectual discipline and moral energy. . . . His mind was trained through so many years of study that no war situation could disturb him. In the most difficult ones, he quickly pointed out the goal to be reached and the means to employ, and each one of us felt that it must be right."

In 1901 the anticlericals—whom we are accustomed to see lauded in the Canadian press as the champions of liberty—retired Ferdinand Foch the great military teacher and dumped him at Leon as Lieut-Col. to the 29th Artillery. The name of the anti-clerical who supplanted him may be left to rot in deserved oblivion. In 1907 Clemenceau, then Minister of War, in spite of the fact that his brother was a Jesuit, sent Foch back to the Superior School of War as its commander. This is to be marked up to the credit of the "old tiger" as the anticlerical and Masonic political clique were at this time blacklisting military officers if they allowed their wives to go to Mass!

The foregoing considerations may throw some light on the sensational statement of Premier Clemenceau.

And the circumstances of his appointment may afford further light.

General Foch succeeded Marshal Joffre as head of the General Staff on May 15th, 1917. On March 21st, 1918, came the great and expected German offensive, the line was broken and the British in France were threatened with envelopment. On March 25th representatives of the Allied governments met at Doullens and Foch was empowered to do whatever he thought advisable to prevent the threatened disaster. Not however until Oct 30th was the official announcement made that Foch was Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies. In the meantime unofficial statements to this effect were contradicted by the extreme Tory organs in England. They asserted that Foch was only empowered "to coordinate" the work of the Allied armies. "Not from our press agencies but from English papers one learned that the old Tory-Junker Military clique had held doggedly to their grip on the new citizen armies of Britain. That was the class which engineered the mutiny of the Carragh of Kildare, and competence of their military tools was illustrated by General Gough, who was dismissed in disgrace immediately after Foch took over the supreme command. But this clique all-powerful though it was in peace and maintaining its dominance during the War, could not withstand the pressure of President Wilson nor brave the opposition of Lloyd George who was clothed with the civil authority of England: when hanging over the jagged edge of the abyss they perforce consented to subordinate everything to Foch's command. How strongly Lloyd George asserted himself against this powerful class is evident from Foch's response to the British Prime Minister's birthday greeting last October: "I do not forget that it was to your insistence that I owe the position which I occupy today."

We have heard the assertion confidently made that so late as June of this year there was powerful and menacing caballing to oust General Foch from the supreme command of the Allied armies.

The sensation created by Clemenceau's remark might assume mighty proportions if we knew all that lies behind it. At any rate it but for him "Foch would have had no command" the world owes much to the "old tiger" of France.

DRAFTING RECRUITS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

"Johnnie," said a venerable priest, laying his hand upon the head of a fourteen year old altar boy who had served his Mass one fine morning in August, "you will pack your trunk and go to St. Michael's this September." Johnnie obeyed without question, and today he is a zealous member of the diocesan choir. No doubt if the priest had asked Johnnie if he thought he would be called to serve at the altar he would have hesitated and demurred. Most Catholic girls, at some period in their lives, have conceived the idea of being nuns, and they have no hesitation about consulting their pastors on the matter. But a boy is different. Before he has reached the age of six he has perhaps many times proclaimed that he was going to be an Archbishop or Pope; but soon after

he has attained the use of reason he becomes very reticent in regard to his spiritual aspirations. To fill up the depleted ranks of the clergy recourse must be had to some more drastic measures than the self-initiative of possible candidates for the priesthood and general exhortations from the pulpit.

The Gospel for the feast of St. Andrew prompts a suggestion which we offer as a merely tentative proposition. Our Lord did not say to the young fisherman "Would you like to follow Me?" but "Come follow Me." Why should not our Bishops, who are Christ's representatives, do likewise, either personally or through their deputies? The Bishop delegates the superiors of seminaries to decide upon the qualifications of the young men under their care, and his official call to orders, in which he is guided by their recommendations, constitutes the ultimate mark of a vocation. We see no reason, therefore, why parish priests, who officially represent the Bishop in their respective parishes, should not be the judges of the incipient marks of a vocation in the boys of their mission. Of course the confessor is the judge in the case of volunteers who consult him in making a decision; but we would be in favor of going farther than that by empowering the parish priest to draft those who give promise of having the necessary qualifications for the ministry. His intimate knowledge of the candidates and of their family history renders him competent to make a wise selection. Other things being equal, the draftee often makes a more valiant and more capable soldier than the volunteer. In the military sphere a young man may hesitate to volunteer for service, not through cowardice or a lack of the spirit of self-sacrifice but because he is undecided as to whether his duty calls him to remain at home or join the army. When, however, that decision is made for him by competent authority, he devotes all his energies to becoming an efficient soldier. Now that pecuniary obstacles that stood between many young men and the priesthood in the past have been removed by generous benefactions, we see no reason why a parish priest may not say to a promising boy in his parish "Come follow me."

It goes without saying that no coercion should be used as is the case with those drafted for the army. The young man should be left perfectly free to answer the call or not. The point is that the matter of his having a vocation should be decided for him before he is moved to ask for a decision himself. As we have already intimated, if we are to depend solely upon the initiative of prospective candidates the services of many, who would have made excellent priests, will be lost to the Church. Christ's words to His apostles "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you and have appointed you" would argue this manner of procedure.

In the Province of Quebec there has always been an abundance of candidates for the sanctuary. One of the chief reasons for this, we believe, that a very large percentage of the youth of that province receive their classical training and study Philosophy on the same benches with those who are preparing for the priesthood. These young men have an excellent opportunity of judging whether or not it is the will of God that they should become priests. They mingle with those who are aspiring to the sacred ministry. They learn what obligations it imposes, what dangers beset it, what abundant graces are attached to it, what are its joys and its dignity. In the meantime they are acquiring excellent training for a position in the world if they decide to devote themselves to some secular calling. In other parts of Canada the situation is different. Many of our boys have not even the opportunity of attending a Separate school. If one of them goes to a Catholic college it is often presumed by the members of the congregation that it is decided that he is to become a priest. If he does not there is a stigma attached to him. He is pointed to as a pretre manque. This difficulty is obviated in Quebec, and would be obviated elsewhere if more of our young men availed themselves of a course of training in a Catholic college; or if it were understood that those who were sent there on the advice of their parish priests were selected because there was a reasonable hope that at least the majority of them would enter the ranks of the clergy.

It may be objected that in comparing Our Lord's action with that of His representative the parallel is forced, since the latter can have only a limited knowledge of a young man's dispositions and cannot confer upon him, as Christ could, the necessary qualifications for the sacred calling. Those whom Our Lord personally invited to follow Him had the necessary qualifications. Nor was Judas an exception, albeit he subsequently abused the graces of his state. Of course, since the decision rests on the fallible judgment of a human agent in the case where a Bishop or a priest selects young men as probable candidates for the priesthood, there can be no absolute certitude that all have a divine vocation. It should, therefore, occasion no surprise if prudent judgment of future promise does not always find its fulfillment.

The Divine Babe of Bethlehem. Who does all things well, leaves nothing undone to provide for the salvation of souls and the perpetuation of His Incarnation through the growth of His mystical body, the Church, and the multiplication of His real Body wherever there are souls to worship and to be nourished. This perpetuating of the Incarnation is the work of the priesthood. There must, therefore, be an increase of candidates for the ministry; otherwise there will be a loss of souls and a dwarfing of Christ's mystical Body. Catholic boys and Catholic parents should realize their responsibility and understand that a vocation to the priesthood is not some mysterious thing that is accompanied by extraordinary signs, but consists in possessing, in the prudent judgment of superiors, the necessary physical, mental and moral qualities coupled with a willingness to respond to the invitation of the representative of Him Who said to St. Andrew "Come follow Me."

THE GLEANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE CELEBRATION of "Britain's Day" in the United States was memorable. It marked the rebirth of racial fraternity between the two great English speaking nations. Its effect in the direction of world-peace will become manifested as the years go on. Meanwhile, as reciprocating the good fellowship thus shown by the United States why should not an "American Day" be held in Canada? The idea is respectfully commended to the consideration of the Dominion Government.

THE GUELPH Novitiate affair is not to be allowed to pass into oblivion. The dauntless cohort of notoriety-seeking persons and political axe-grinders of the far-famed Order are not content to be thus deprived of the fruit of their labors. Even infamy is better to some minds than reputable obscurity. Hence the Government at Ottawa is besieged to institute an official open investigation. It will be noted of course, that the visit to Ottawa was not "open," and that notwithstanding the Government's wish to the contrary, the delegates had unanimously favored exclusion of the press. The reasons for secrecy will transpire presently should an "investigation" be decided upon. The public, however, will not fail to note at the outset this inalienable characteristic of Lodge procedure as it has been known and practiced in the Canadian political arena from time out of mind.

THE ACCOUNT of the sinking, on June 27th last, of the Canadian Hospital Ship, Llandovery Castle, just issued by the Director of Public Information at Ottawa, constitutes a record which will forever stand as a witness to German barbarity and inhumanity throughout the War. The information contained in the pamphlet, which should be read by every Canadian, was obtained by personal interviews with the survivors and verified from other sources. It can be perused by nobody without carrying conviction of the deliberate intent and foul motive of both those who planned and those who perpetrated that wanton outrage upon all the best instincts of humanity. "Deliberate in its conception," says the author of the pamphlet, "every circumstance connected with the incident reveals the German in the light of the cunning murderer who employs every foul means of destroying all trace of his despicable crime."

THERE IS, however, another feature of the affair which Canada will cherish with legitimate pride for all time. This concerns the conduct