THE CATHOLIC REGISTER, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1903

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

Antoine Verdeau, the cobbler of Angeldorf, sat smoking his long pipe at his cottage door. It was a pleasmat evening in July and the streets the little town were full of people stager to get a breath of cool air after the intole able heat of the day. Some, as they passed, saluted Ver-ideau; but, as he either ignored their met him there." greetings or simply nodded his head with gloomy indifference, no one felt mencouraged to stop and talk with rest of Angela orf there had long been to do with the foolish chattering township, its petty interests, its were not in the fashion!" The girl reddened. "He seems an agreeable man," she said; "but even if he were otherwise, I don't see rest of Angeleorf there had long been miserably short memory? His only miserably short memory? His only how it can concern me, father," concern in the few years of life that added, naively. remained to him was to think, to brood, to remember.

Sur bur not

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is an Alsatian born and bred; there was no one in the place Thirty years ago, and it seemed to him but yesterday! Thirty years; so long? He felt he was getting old, speak a word for him. Angeldorf fears and the fear hoze his heart lest the oppressor too much for that. It shadows should gather round him ere has come to believe that La Ravan-che is an idle cry-that she will never his great dream was realized.

Yes, it was thirty years since the with wild intensity, lifting his eyes ambardment of Angeldorf. Verdeau, and talking to the ceiling rather than then in the prime of life, had been to Victorine; "she shall come! shared the bacbarous spectacle. He was away at the time, far from wife and child, sgating for his beloved long the time seems!" France with the army of the Loire, He received the awful tidings which had turned the whole current of his from the lips of a comrade during the dark hours of the bivouac; how the little Alphonse, then his only child, had been killed outright a German shell; and how another missile had struck and shattered the wall of the new house which he had built with the hard-earned savings from his dail; toil

As he thought it all again ecame greatly agitated and his - rew dim. . I would drive him mad in time, this silent brooding. He must by from his thoughts, fi that were ssible. Rising suddenly from his whair he put his pipe aside and hobaled down the garden path into the street. He t ttered as he walked; he was getting more feeble each year.

Adjoining the cottage was a strip of land which he had bought for at destiny, but the victor over in-credible obstacles. With convincing force he would have rendered articubuilding purposes many, many years rubbish, for the misfortunes which late the vague aspirations of the peohad overtagen old Verdeau had para ple for revenge, and perhaps - such lyzed most of his energies, diverting was the fond parent's conceit-would even have headed the attack against those that remained into one chanmel, concentrating them upon one the hereditary foe. great ideal, that of La Revanche!

At the other as end of this fallow Victorine had never known, was the land stood the house which he had sole means by which she could obtain built, int. aute, it for Alphonse when any conception of the central idea the mute appeal for silence in he grew to be a man-the house which dominated her father's mind. eyes restrained him. which the tree ans had made a tar-get for take cruel shells. The old was unintelligible to her. Born a man pauses, contemplating the struc- full five years after the war, she un- evening, she went out of the cottage, ture is sincare It was much larger consciously accepted German ascend- leaving the old man still at his than the cotta e where he lived, hav-ing all the pre-msions of a villa. But of things, a French Alsace was his-bearing traces of recent tears. Then earshot, and on no account must he the rest of the company did not exsigns of ucla dation were every- torically too remote to be passion- it was that Verdeau found it within be offended. where the wildows were broken, ately apprehended. "Why not let the him to break the silence.

or Bavarian, 'tis all the same. how does the township take latest insult to France? With And of her love had caused her. He sim-this ply looked down upon her sadly, reits proachfully, as at some weak and worthy object; such a look in his eyes as schoolmaster might give a child who was unable to grasp a wonted servility, I warrant, smiling back its thanks for every lash of the German taskmaster!" theme, to him, so simple. Then he "Herr Bauer seems to be popular in Angeldorf," the girl ventured, timleft her to tears, and slowly ascended the creaking staircase. When he reach-Her father shrugged his shoulders 'You have seen him?'' he asked. ed his bedroom at the back of the

cottage he threw open the window "He has been at the Berniers; once and looked out. The white radiance of the moon rendered all the more prominent objects of the landscape plainly visible. He could see the clearing in the for-She rose quickly from her chair. "And of course, you like him, with

the rest?" he returned sarcastically. est which ran up to the borders of "It would not be Victorine if, she Angeldorf, and near by glistened one of the white stones marking the frontier line. Suddenly, as if by magic; his illusion fell away from him and the bubble of his dream was burst. He realized for the first time since the war the mad fut first of it all. she The landmarks yonder set by the Ger-

"Pierre Michel should have had the job." testily cried the old man. mans-the forest clearing, the white "He stones-were fixed and immovable. La but Revanche would never come. He had to been a fool for cherishing his hopes so long. France cared nothing / for her lost provinces. Her glory had departed; she was supine and asleep. The occasional frontier troubles, the restiveness of a few Alsatians under the conqueror's iron decrees, Boulanger, the charlatan, that overprais-"So you have always said, father." ed alliance with Russia, the verses of was the girl's response; "but how Paul Deroulede, the stagy heroics of a few hot-headed Parisians; where did all these things lead? Nowhere! "Only to those who have lost hope and courage," he replied solemnly. "Thanks to the true God. I have both The ideal was burned out, and these were the miserable flickerings from

still, Victorine. Though I am someits smouldering embers. that hour will come, and with it the man-the new Napoleon, the savior of France, the liberator of the savior of understand the girl I contend to the savior of the savior times impatient, I feel in my heart He heard Victorine sobbing in the man-the new Napoleon, the savior of understand the girl. Leaving her to "La Revanche is dead, France, the liberator of Alsace. Oh, her own devices, he had lived with will never come-now. if my boy had only lived, this glori-ous mission might have been his!" Little Alphone, whose death had kindled and afterward kept alive the idea of La Ravanche in the old pat one

riot's bosom, had become the very genius of the great event, so long de ayed, which would stanch the wounds of France and recover her lost pro vinces. It was the cobbler's fond hope Before he fell asleep he had again He was a soldier become the Antoine Verdeau of the and so understood. days before the war; the practical to save and acquire, to benefit his family. What had worked the that this bright boy, inheriting his family. iather's zeal, would have acquired the miracle? culture to shape its promptings. To daughter' miracle? It may have been his daughter's grief, or the strange, im-mutable look of the frontier stones in Paris he would have gone in the flower of his manhood, no peevish railer the cold moonlight. He could not tell

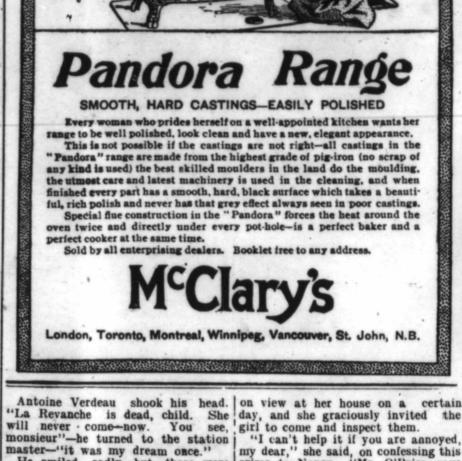
When he awoke he felt numbed and listless. The dream which had fed his vitality had departed. There was a marked change in the girl as well. Her vivacity was gone. She no longer of dissatisfaction. gathered gossip as the bees gather honey; no longer lavishly retailed it. Subdued and careworn she went about

her duties mechanically, and when her father would have spoken with her her For a whole week she remained indoors, and then, one balmy summer cash."

"But

replied

the inside was s were damp and mil- matter rest?" she thought. Like her "You have been to the



else. Small wonder, then, that to master-"it was my dream once." my dear," she said, on confessing this escape his dreary society Victorine He smiled sadly, but there were had thrown herself into the arms of tears in his eyes. The younger man me a donation, and it would have bowed his head in respectful silence. been very mean of me not to invite He was a soldier and patriot, too, his daughter as well, as the other ladies.

And thus it was that Angeldorf lost "You are playing right into the tradesman, intent upon affairs, eager that insistent reminder of its shame, O'Briens' hands, mother-that's all. and once more the havoc wrought You know very well why they want through the hatred of the nations was to get a footing here.' "Hadn't you better chain up Uncle repaired dy the love of a man for a maid .- Chambers' Journal.

Edward?" suggested Bernard. "It might be more prudent to secure him in somew ay while Miss O'Brien is on **A HASTY JUDGMENT** the premises."

To which Nancy, who was at least slender gold chain glittering with pearls, and held it up with an air some of our valuables do divised if On the appointed day Mrs. Wilson's

"This is Uncle Edward's present to friends and acquaintances gathered to our stall," she said. "It's a great inspect the future contents of her deal more than I expected from the stall which were displayed to fine efcranky creature. No doubt he gave fect in her drawing-room-overflow-it because he knew we should have ing tables, chairs and cabinets, and some difficulty in finding a purchaser. even dangling from the curtains. Tea Who on earth buy's jewelry at a ba-was served; "the small talk and the zaar! I would rather have had hard kettles hummed in tune." But after the hostess' hurried handshake and "Hush-sh!" warned Mrs. Wilson, perfunctionary, "Pleased to see you!" for there was danger of the individual no one had paid much attention to

tion which she is sure to mis inder-

stand, and which expose her to very

Bernard looked from one to

other with a touch of defiance.

in Uncle Edward.

tend their courtesy beyond a casual Years ago Edward Wilson had gone remark. She was left stranded, while had a tide of conver returned middle-aged and rich, on and therefore uninteresting to an outwhich later account alone his widow-'sider, flowed " through the various ed sister received him with open groups. True, Uncle Edward gave arms. That she and her children her a kindly nod, supplemented by a would eventually reap the harvest of smile that was positively beautiful in his toil and thrift she did not for a its tenderness; but he was never at moment doubt, arguing that there ease in a fashionable crowd, and on was no one else with any claim upon this occasion he was further handihim. While he toiled she had ignored capped by an inability to distinguish the very fact of his existence; but between poker-work and crystoleum. she fondly hoped that her later policy Thanks to Mrs. Wilson's adroitness, would obliterate her past, and also he was soon safe behind a barricade appear to him in the light of absolute of bedspreads and cushions. From this disinterestedness. "He wants me to call on those room and make his way to Miss ly. "It certainly does not make me



dewed and the mortar in places was mother, who had died in giving her the ould' feat might feel for a whole conquering race,

The gap should never be filled should remain to remind Alsace of her the lethargy of the township, and as and a token, concrete, 'tangible, in- ideas to her. But that last blow to sistent!

times advised him to repair the wall near the frontier as Angeldori - afand put the house in order! Ah, they, fected him so acutely that he was did not understand-those cravens! It obliged to talk.

would bring in rent-something for Victorine's dowry, they said. But he had always spurned their miserly ad-have had the post." vice-the German slaves!

Silently brooding, he retraced his teps through the glowing dusk. The ght from a lamp inside glimmered rough the diamond-shaped panes of cottage window; and on entering response. Verdeau found the table laid for

e evening meal. A young woman of twenty-five or hereabouts, set the old man's chair aware of it, blundering into an aded, with fair hair and grayish lue eyes, and an even, pleasant exion of face, she might have passed for a German maiden. So appearnces can de eive; there was not a drop of Teutonic blood in her veins. She was Antoine Verdeau's daughter. The old man sank into the chair listlessly, and sipped his glass of Victorine avoided her father's gaze "Yes-last night-at the Berniers'," ated the more important items from she replied in a low voice.

"So that is what they say?" he re-marked. ") ou gather gossip as the bees gather honey, Victorine. Indeed, "The Deutschers have made" "But it was not to talk about Ba-"But it was not to talk about Ba-"If so, why don't you introduce her you hear so much, perhaps you can their conquest complete. We give varia that I came here to-day," he to me?" tell me if the new station master is them our sons for their army, our said hesitatingly, "for there is an-""If y

"The station master?" she echoed, in a tone of surprise. "Why, he came

"I hadn't heard," sa said Verdeau. ery wearily. "There is little to interest me in Angeldorf now. But marrisho is the man? An Alsatian, I her!

A fierce expression leaped from the obbler's livs. "A German!" he cried, with supreme contempt. "I thought

"But not a Prussian, father," Vic-

The old metriot looked at her with her brave people."

Victorine?" he said. crumbling and . The house was, as birth, she shrank from the idea of "Yes. it had alwa s seen, untenanted and war between the nations. Of an emi-He hesitated a moment, and then the ragged aparture at the top of nently practical bent, she considered inquired: "You have seen him againwhere the shell had her father's preference for cobbling the station master?' piercet, went unrepaired. So it would shoes in penury instead of repairing "Yes," she replied in a level voice remain as long as Antoine Verdeau the house which the shell had shat-'He asked me to be his wife.' had his way! Ys he gazed at the un- tered a sad piece of infatuation. To Her father showed no surprise. sightly breach a look of bitterness sum up the matter, there was little "You consented?" came into his eyes; not the bitterness suggestive of La Ravanche about Vic-She caught her breath. "No: I re which a man feels for a particular torine except her name, which con-fused. enemy, but the large hatred which tained as it were, the promise of the "Ah!" he breathed heavily. one whose spirit is unbroken by de fulfillment of her father's hopes. why?" Immersed, as he so often was, "I gave no reason," she

The death of her brother, whom

dreamy speculations, Antoine Verdeau in the same monotone. "But" - her The gap should never be filled up! was nevertheless keen enough to per-ile had sworn it! Never, until La Revanche had come. Till then it thusiast. She had imbibed instead you to-morrow." was nevertheless keen enough to per- voice now faltered-"I think he guess-He says-he is coming to shame, France of her duty; a 'sign a consequence he seldom spoke of his Verdeau quietly. "You love him, Vic- them at church the other day and, other; his half-cynical, half-humorous ruining all his prospects for the sake torine?' French pride-the appointment of a The unwonted tenderness in

Some fools in Angeldorf had many German station master in a town so "I saw Pierre Michel pass to-day,

he said a few days later. "He should ging his burden of bitter memories, "But is he a more capable man

than Herr Bauer?" Victorine asked. somewhat needlessly, for she knew Pierre to be a hopeless ne'er-do-well. "He is an Alsatian." was the curt

say through her tears. The reason was much too sentimental to appeal to Victorine, and she found herself, before she was well

vocacy of the Bavarian's claims. "People say, father, that Herr Bauer is well up to his work," she Angeldorf townsfolk. He was courte- made her acquaintance long ago if I should be. observed, with some warmth. has been sergeant in the Eisenbahn on matters dear to his heart; the regiment, and has a good record." "Where did you hear all this. girl?" of Munich, its art, its music, even "That is exactly what I h Verdeau asked, impatiently. "Ah-I its beer. He spoke with the fire and doing ever since I knew her." see-you have met him again?" Victorine avoided her father's gaze.

daughters for their wives! They have other matter which affects me much more deeply. The fact is, Monsieur

At the conclusion of this outburst Verdeau, Victorine and I are in love Victorine's cheeks were flaming red. with each other, and-and-""What are you saying, father?" she "And so would marry?" deau, "What are you saying, father?" she o in-But marry Julie Bernier? Eugene marry I von the source of the sourc

heart.

From the cagerness of his look, Victorine knew that she was on dan-erous ground. "I think not, father," she said. In fact" his searchine, "she said. "I think not, father," she said. In fact" his searchine, "she said. His intensity of her voice caused way?" way?" way?" Well-yes, my expectations?" "Well-yes, my expectations; or, to be exact, my faith that Providence will preserve my health and strength and unpretentious style. That they had known better days was apparent he asked. "Your expectations?" "Well-yes, my expectations; or, to be exact, my faith that Providence will preserve my health and strength "I think not, father," she said. "In fact"—his searching glance com-iealously guarded for a whole month! am not wholly selfish in my joy. Antoine Verdeau sank back in his shall not take her far away. Why.

contempt o's pity. "If a lion had at-tacked yo . kirl," he retorted, "would you ask what breed it was? Prussian distress which the sudden disclosure vanche had come!"

see nard, her good-looking son, bent his py expectancy in his dark eyes that she has chosen me. head over the cat stretching scooping revealed much. Uncle Edward's Mrs. Wilson was sobbing hysterical-paws to the warm blaze. "He met brown hands clasped fast upon each ly, declaring that her foolish boy was or working for someone else, "He shall have his answer," said paws to the warm blaze. it seems, recognized a former ac- expression into a sad sternness.

There was a new light in her father's give me something for the bazaar, nard for having, as she said, singled per, her attention scornfully abstracteyes, which showed him to be no too." longer the patriot busy with his "Oh, you can't take people up like out tion. dreams, no longer the recluse hug- that!" declared Nancy couche tion. that!" declared Nancy, crossly. "Well, really, mother, I did not in-"What do you know about them, ex- tend the spectators to think me more

perceive and sympathize with the de-sires and weaknesses of a woman's were not very choice, if all accounts rather prominent relief. Miss Edward's beautiful nearl chain is she threw herself at his feet and been deliberately flung in his way, and I thought that a display of fearkissed his hands with passionate for reasons sufficien ions." hess composure on my part would re-energy. "Father!" was all she could "Heigh-ho for the charity that assure the others and induce them to "Indeed it

thinks no ill!" said Bernard. "Come, address her." When Eugene Bauer entered the cot-opportunity of doing a double kind-nard. I am very seriously annoyed tage the next day he found Antoine ness pleasing Uncle and breaking, if Verdeau very different indeed from ever so slightly, the monotony of the descriptions given of him by the Miss O'Brien's life. I should have so, mother; but I don't see why you

"He ously received, and encouraged to talk had been a girl." "Then, thank goodness, you are hills of his native country, the glories not!"

"That is exactly what I have been animation of the South German, and "Pray, when or how did you come unkind criticism." revealed no trace of Prussian stolid- to know her?" asked Nancy, sharply "Now, I should ity. But when these impersonal mat- and suspiciously.

"In my own sweet way, through ters were left behind, and the main ber budge of town gossip. A thin "Why does he go there so much?" business of his mission called for at-mile play I round her father's lips he inquired fiercely. "And what does old Bernier mean by encouraging it was only when Victorine entered sistance when it played me false. You

"If so, why don't you introduce her as a peg on which to hang their gos-o me?" is a said; "; but I am not sorry "If you must know the truth, my for this opportunity of declaring that

pretty Nancy, it is because you can I hope one day to make her my be so intensely disagreeable to people wife you don't like, and I feared she Mrs. Wilson gasped; Nancy sneered; might think it a family failing," he from Uncle Edward proceeded a sound replied; which retort rang down the whereby a laugh entered partnership with a groan.

curtain, so to speak. By "those O'Briens" Mrs. Wilson meant a fragile old man and his pret- he asked. "Your expectations?"

I to the most superficial observer. They am doing, and harder, if need be, for older you will find that Miss O'Brien has possession of that identical set; but at present her energies were stand what you are hinting at, Uncle here station master is Herr e expression leaster is Herr e expression leaster is et is sufficient with the palsy. i = e vortession leaster is et is sufficient with the palsy. i = e vortession leaster is expression leaster is expr

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never had the most remote intention If you are of leaving my money to you.

"We shall not be worse friends for retreat he beheld his nephew enter the that, I hope," said Bernard, cheerful-O'Briens," she remarked-and Ber- O'Brien's solitary corner, with a hap- other than I am; and such as I am

of a little nonenity when Nancy, who why not get a farm of your quaintance in the old man. Anything After the departure of the guests had been covering the more delicate own in voice caused her to look up suddenly. to please him, of course. They might Mrs. Wilson remonstrated with Ber- of the bazaar trophies with tissue pa-

out Miss O'Brien for special atten- ed from her brother's love affairs, gave a sharp cry and turned round, "Well, really, mother, I did not in- her face quite pale with excitement. ging his burden of bitter memories, "What do you know about them, ex-but the man and the father, eager to cept that they are hopelessly shabby? than ordinarily polite. It may be that would happen!" she exclaimed. There

Miss Edward's beautiful pearl chain is

"Indeed it is not nonsense, mother. For particulars write to

Case and chain were in the box, and it is empty now," said Nancy, holding up a cardboard box with hands that trembled in harmony with her "I am seriously distressed if that is voice.

"You had better ask the maids if they know anything about it," advis-ed Mrs. Wilson. But Nancy tossed up "It is neither right nor proper to compromise a girl so very far your her chin, retorting, with significant social inferior by meaningless atten-

emphasis: "I believe our servants to be quite above suspicion, mother."

"And are not the guests?" asked "Now, I should like to hear what Bernard, considerably nettled. you have to say for yourself," chimed "I am not familiar with the antecedents of every person who was here the to-day, and I can guite understand that a valuable chain would be a "I am sorry if I should be the cause

source of temptation to-a poor girl of the scandal-mongers of the neighin want of a trousseau." borhood using Miss O'Brien's name Bernard was as pale as his sister. "Take care, Nancy! When you in-

sult Miss O'Brien, you insult me," said "That is your business," swered, angrily. "Mine is to inform the police of what has occurred, and to ask them to take whatever steps they think necessary.

Uncle Edward had stood quietly and "What are you going to marry on?" silently through the storm of words, looking from one person to another as if he scarcely comprehended what the commotion was about. Now he spoke, addressing Bernard.

"I believe that before you are much

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