

and the fingers he pressed against his burning eyes were wet. Yet the abbé was waiting, and slowly—there was tenderness and shame—there was the Englishman's lowered voice—he told, in French, those sins. How many of them were not his own as well?

Then came an uplifted hand over both bowed heads. Thade had murmured, half-aloud, the simple act of contrition, neglected, but not forgotten, for so long. And George Acton, in his heart, spoke to God the same in meaning, though in words of his own.

Then Thade was at peace. Again the priest spoke. "Tell him to say for his penance, if he can, this prayer."

"Can you hear me, lad?" The eyelids, fallen again, quivered an answer to the captives' words. "This is the prayer you must try to say. I will say it—for us both—the last words were inaudible—'Merciful Jesus, have mercy on me!'"

The lips, bluish now, moved gently, but no sound came. It might not yet be the hour of death for Thade, but there would be very little further consciousness for him before going, clean and ready, to his God.

Time was passing, and for the dying man there was nothing more to do. But if the others were to do their duty on the morrow both must take what rest the night could give.

With a final blessing the abbé turned away, only to find, as he retraced his steps towards his own trenches, that the English officer was at his side.

"Look here," he said abruptly, and his face was tense and white.

"I've known these Irish soldiers, and I've wondered sometimes at the hold their religion had on even the worst. I've taken them to church. I've heard their sermons—not, indeed, that I listened much—only I want to show you that I know something of the Catholic Church. I had thought their devotion superstition, their obedience fear. Now I know it is simply—the truth." Then, almost to himself, he added, "What but the truth could make a man do—this thing?"

"And knowing the truth?" asked the abbé in a softened voice.

"And knowing the truth," returned the other, firmly, "God helping me, I must follow it."

"Into the Catholic Church?"

"Yes."

Perhaps the abbé, who was still young, scarcely understood what this admission meant from an English Protestant officer.

"You will need instruction," he said uncertainly.

"I will need instruction in everything," replied Captain Acton, master of himself again, "excepting in the fact that the Catholic religion is the truth."

"You have in your own church, received the baptism?" asked the abbé.

"Captain Acton shook his head."

"All my people are Quakers," he replied. "We do not baptize, as in other sects. No, I shall have to begin again, in the Catholic Church—begin with instruction of course, then baptism, and everything else. If I am spared through this war—"

He raised his cap and stood for a moment, beheaded, under a sky where stars were beginning to shine.

"If I am spared, my first act going home, will be to seek admission to the Catholic Church."

"The din of the previous days' fighting, the falling of the shells, the dead and dying all around him came back in a flash to the soldier-priest. Up to now he and the man at his side had come through scatheless but what of the days to come? In a few short words he told of the necessity of baptism, for which, under such circumstances, no more was needed than a full belief and a firm intention of seeking instruction and following the teachings of the Church."

"Then you could baptize me here—now?" questioned the Englishman.

"You have the wish, the good will," replied the abbé, "and, see I have the water." He drew from his side the water-bottle that had been refilled before he left his lines.

After that it was but the matter of a moment—this strange baptism, brought about almost in a miraculous manner.

Obediently George Acton knelt before the priest in the shadow of the poplars, and the waters of regeneration fell coolly on his brow, whilst with the simple obedience of a child he accepted this rite as a necessity, half understood, yet obeyed because it was the ordinance of God.

Then, under the poplar trees, these two men parted, each to return to his post of duty in the trenches, each to take a few hours of much needed rest; only the English officer, more under the influence of the night's emotions than of the day's fatigues, lay wakeful, but at peace, with his comrades sleeping around him.

There was time next morning before the grey dawn broke white-ness in the east to hear that Thade Flynn had no further need of hospital or doctor, and with a glow in his heart that the boy's last wish had been fulfilled, his captain took his place again for another four days in the trenches.

But for him these four days were not to be. In the fierce attack no one knew afterwards exactly when Captain Acton was hit, but before midday his body was lying still and already stiffening, not very far from that of Thade Flynn. And together—surely together—their souls went up before the great white throne, where, one in all the cleanliness of true contrition and absolution, the other white in its baptismal whiteness, together they heard the words of the all-merciful Judge, "Well done!"

CARDINAL O'CONNELL

POINTS OUT LESSONS OF THE WAR

IN ELUQUENT AND TIMELY ADDRESS AT THE FEDERATION MEETING HELD FOR ITALIANS

The announcement that His Eminence, the Cardinal, the leader of the Federation, would attend and speak to the Italians of the North End, Boston, in their native tongue served to draw an audience of more than 2,000 men and women, many of whom came from other sections of the city. That they deeply appreciated the privilege and honour accorded them by their spiritual father was manifested in no unmistakable manner by the extraordinary enthusiasm they manifested when the Cardinal made his appearance, the remarkably cordial welcome they gave him and the vigorous applause, given time and again and long drawn out, with which they received the eloquent words of His Eminence.

INDICATION OF A LIVING FAITH

"The wonderful interest which the Federation is arousing among all the Catholics hereabouts is a splendid indication that the faith of our people is a living faith, a faith which is not to be content with merely crying Lord, Lord, and then falling back into the apathy which stifles action. No, it is a faith which realizes that life consists in action."

REASON OF THE ENIGMA

"I have met them myself in nearly every Catholic country of Europe, and I have seen them, even here, here and nowadays, thank God, the tide of Catholic activity is so high that it is rare to find a Catholic who does not openly practice his faith as well as profess it."

THE WORLD'S ADVICE

"And so they go through life, smiling astutely at those who daily practice their religion even at the sacrifice of many things which the world is constantly offering to men who have no conscience, who are willing to buy its wares by treachery to God. Why not have both? they say. Why it needs only a little shrewdness."

CHRIST'S TERRIBLE WORDS

"There is one sentence of Christ infinitely just and therefore infinitely terrible, which no one who has ever heard can ever forget—'Every one, therefore, that shall confess before me, I will also confess him before My Father Who is in heaven. But he who shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in heaven.' Jesus Christ will not be cheated. His faith will allow for all the compromises which will allow you to shall not deny Him here and have Him hereafter. Choose."

THE WARRIOR'S CRY

"And we are here still safe, still at peace. But though thousands of miles away we see that man, he is our brother. We see the light of a restored sight in his eyes, as they look up through the smoke of war toward heaven. And we hear his voice ringing across the width of the world, 'Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day and forever.' Let us take up that cry, let us carry it into the battle-fields of our everyday life. Let us make the world about us stand and hear it whether it will or not."

DECAY AMONG SCOTCH PRESBYTERIANS

MINISTER STATES THAT NEARLY ONE-HALF THE CHILDREN ARE NOT BAPTIZED

The Rev. Hugh Stevenson, of Dumblane, a clergyman of the Scottish U. F. Presbyterian Church, made an astonishing statement recently at a Presbytery meeting held in Dunfermline. He stated that of 120,000 children born annually in Scotland, only about 70,000 were baptized; he added that "one-half of the homes of the people were without religious training."

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very simple reason and, for one who believes in God at all, a very convincing one. No, you cannot have every day infidelity and faith when you want it.

"Have you never heard of a treasure that never could be found again simply because it was buried so securely? Have you never heard of the great doors of a safe refusing to budge just because, for years they have not been opened, and had become so rusted that nothing could separate them and nothing could move the hinges? Have you never heard of muscles atrophied for lack of exercise? Have you never heard of minds run fallow because they were allowed to rust? Have you never heard of hearts grown cold because they had become purely selfish, and how love and affection had died forever?"

"These men pride themselves on their shrewdness, but they are simply feeble-minded. No, you cannot keep your faith in a strong box, could you, out of mind, and all you have to do is to turn to just when you need it. No, it will not be there: 'You shall seek Me and you shall not find Me.' They flatter themselves that they value their faith in hiding it. Why? They have in reality sold it."

"They want the false things the world offers and the truth which God offers both at the same time. You cannot have them both. You must choose. You may deny your faith either by word or action, and that price you may go out in search of many gaudy beads and gilded trifles, and may be your will get them."

LESSONS OF THE WAR

"The war is teaching the whole world many needed lessons. It is teaching the folly of pride, the insecurity of boasting, the futility of greed, the bitterness of injustice. But the war is teaching a lesson deeper than all these things because it combines and contains them all. It is teaching the world that God will not be cheated."

"Either God, the faith of God, the law of God, with all the difficulties which that possession implies, but with the absolute certainty of moral security and eternal hope, or else the deceits of guilty conscience, the evanescent intoxication of ill-gotten wealth, the bitter hardness of an infidel science, one or the other, but not both."

RICHES FOR APOSTATES

"There is no doubt at all that even now in our day, and shame to say it, right here among us, you can have a good many things if you deny your faith which you have to fight for otherwise all your lives."

"Yes, nearly all the difficulties which Catholics find about them would soon dissolve into thin air once they were willing, like the apostate Judas, to betray their Master. The thirty pieces of silver are soon ready. But you take them at your peril. The day must come when you would give them back; yes, and all the world, if only you could see your Master again. But it is written, 'You shall seek Me and shall not find Me.'"

"The secret sects do their work in Italy, in France and Portugal well. The victim thinks when he is lured that he can put away the pearl secretly; that he may ride to position and influence by hiding the pledges of his baptism. But he soon finds that it is no longer hidden. It is lost, lost forever."

"And we know and doubtless you know, of men who in their last moments wept and cried aloud in agony for a minister of God that they might recover the treasure of faith, of religion, of the last Sacraments."

"But the guard was at the door, the guard that mocked him, that saw him die clamoring for the priest who would never come, because the guard was there to see that he could not come."

"That is the way thousands in Italy, in France, in Portugal and in Mexico have paid the penalty of trying to cheat God, of trying to keep their faith and sell it, too, of hiding their Catholic inheritance during life in order to get what was offered them by those who hate their faith as Lucifer hates Christ."

THE WORLD'S ADVICE

"And so they go through life, smiling astutely at those who daily practice their religion even at the sacrifice of many things which the world is constantly offering to men who have no conscience, who are willing to buy its wares by treachery to God. Why not have both? they say. Why it needs only a little shrewdness."

"Put your pearl in safe keeping until you need it, and by and by, when one is old, and in the meanwhile go in and get everything you can by dishonesty, by treachery, by double dealing, yes, even by letting it be understood that you were a Catholic once, yes, of course, you couldn't help that, you were born so, but one must be practical in a hard world, and so year after year no Mass, no confession, no Catholic association no public open profession of your secret allegiance."

"Oh, no, why spoil everything. There is the pearl all safely locked up in its secret drawer, safe, all safe. 'Now if to get money or position or this or that which the world offers, the pearl must be kept buried, why what harm? Why not get all you can out of life, and at the end of life have the pearl, too? Why not? Why? Well, just because it is impossible to cheat God. That is a

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"In these days of awful sadness the horrors of war are opening the eyes of many in Europe. Before the shrapnel and the shell they are driven to a true estimate of all things. What in all that crisis avail all their subtleties, their compromises, their double dealing? What with death staring them in the face matter all the vile threats of the secret organizations which turned their priests' adrift, closed their churches and bade them conceal their faith?"

"A thousand messages from the battlefield bring back assurances that after all neither Combes nor the rest of the blasphemous brood have succeeded in putting out the lights of heaven. And millions upon millions of men will find through the hell of the battlefield the road to faith and heaven again."

"Will they keep it? Will they listen once again when at last peace has returned to all the earth to those minions of infidelity who before bought their great inheritance with gold or frightened them into apostasy by threats and persecutions?"

DAWN OF A GLORIOUS DAY

"We shall see. We shall see. But we cannot believe in the bright vision of Christ appearing amid the flash of cannon can ever be extinguished for them again. We cannot believe that the terrible voice of a conscience often betrayed, but now audible above the roar and din of musketry, can ever be silenced."

"No, all over Europe there is already visible a rosy dawn of a long and brilliant day. And when the smoke, which for months has blurred the vision of her fertile fields and beautiful towns, has at last cleared away, a new Europe will appear, a

Europe on its knees before God it has sinned against, a Europe which has had enough of the rags of the false trappings of infidelity and doubt and the gospel of disorder, a Europe turning once more with eyes which shall see clearly, though still bedimmed with bitter tears, the old faith triumphant at last over all her enemies."

"And once again Europe will turn in her chastened pride from the far off country of deceit and lies to the plenty of her Father's house. Once again she will cast from her too greedy hands the spoils of Beelzebub, and kneel penitent and shriven at the foot of Golgotha, looking once more up to that cross which she has insolently banished; for health and restoration and national order and enduring peace will come only from Calvary."

"Keep your eye on your children's conduct at all times, as far as possible. Let them never be far away from you if you can help it, and make it your business always to know where they are. Insist that they shall come straight home after school, and then, if they want to go anywhere, let them ask permission."

"St. John Chrysostom, speaking fifteen hundred years ago, said: 'People take better care of their cows and horses than they do of their children!' And is it not true today? If you have a horse or a cow you always know pretty well where they are to be found. Can you say the same of your children? Even at night, when they should all be in the house, many of you do not know where they are. They are running the road somewhere and learning no good, you may depend on that. That is criminal carelessness on the part of parents who permit it. The youngsters should never be allowed out after dark, and even with the grown-up ones, you should insist that they should be in at an early hour. There must be no going to bed and leaving the doors open for them to

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Church was faced with a great problem. Evidently the Scottish Presbyterian ministers are battling against a rising tide of heathenism. The problem is a grave one (says the Irish Weekly) for them, and subscribers in this country to "missions" maintained for the "conversion" of Irish Catholics in Connaught might turn their attention to the abandonment of religion ascribed to two-thirds of the people across the Sea of Moyle.—Providence Visitor.

A MESSAGE 1,500 YEARS OLD

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come in. How any father or mother can go to sleep with an easy conscience while their boys or girls are out and they don't know where they are is something hard to understand.—The Angelus.

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