

BERNARD SHAW

Cynical Irish Dramatist Whose Play Has raised a Furor in New York. A case of "Supercivilized Celt." Philosophy of Shawism.

By Dr. Maurice Francis Egan in the Milwaukee "Catholic Citizen"

The sensation of the moment in New York is the Celtic Shaw—a type of the supercivilized Celt, without principles; and the slave of the conditions of his time. The Celt is clear sighted, and, when he reasons, is most logical of men. Bernard Shaw, the author of "Candida," and the cynical play against which Mr. McAdoo of New York is protesting, is one of the cleverest and most brilliant writers of the day.

He is as much of a mocker as Voltaire was, without the bitterness of Voltaire. He has all the clear sightedness of the Celt, all his love of form and symmetry, and all that audacity and recklessness which makes the Celt a terror in war and the most dangerous of rebels, whether against religion or society, when faith fails him in either one or the other, or in both. Faith has failed Shaw, as it has failed George Moore, as it is failing many cultivated young Irishmen in Ireland to-day, under the influence of a baleful supercivilization.

The difference in the Saxon point of view as evidenced in the epic of Beowulf and in the saga of Chuchillain is, in the main, the dimness which clouds the outlines of things in the first and the luminousness of all outlines in the second. There is, too, an analyzing determination on the part of Chuchillain and Queen Meave and the rest to go to the bitter end in everything they undertake. This is a Celtic trait. The Irish are accused of possessing every defect under the sun, but they have never been accused of being "quitters."

This Shaw is not a "quitter." He sees that a greater part of society—the supercivilized part—has determined to do without religion. He sees, too, that, while assuming that a system of ethics is necessary for the preservation of society, it will not accept the very source of ethics, Supreme Ruler, or the only source of the power that binds society together to-day, Christianity. He takes conditions as he sees them, the woman of the upper middle class, who declares that she does not want her husband to live with her after the moment he ceases to love her, the man who declares that there is no sensation which a normal human being ought not to accept as part of his development. To bid goodbye to one's husband when he sees another woman more attractive, is a duty,—Ibsen thinks so. To wreathe oneself with roses and lose oneself in wine or lust—is also a duty; that gentle rebel, Maeterlink, comes very near it.

And there are hundreds of men and women whom we meet every day among the intensely respectable classes who think and say these things in the language of Ibsen and Maeterlink. "In my time we had God," says an old-fashioned French woman, in a comedy, as she reflects on a condition of society in which there is no high court of appeal. Supercivilization means the substitution of culture for faith, of anarchy, in theory at least, for the conservatism of real civilization.

The ballet at the opera in St. Petersburg, which is amusing the great nobles in Russia while the people clamor, is called "Civilization." Its centre—its pivot,—its point of light,—is a body of the character of the scarlet woman mentioned in the Bible. She is the sun, and she dances as the sun is supposed to dance on an Easter day; and she hops; and she turns a hundred times after the manner of Herodias, and she is the very soul of civilization, which translated, means "supercivilization," whose father is Unfaith and whose mother name is unmentionable.

Shaw, in "Candida," in "You Never Can Tell," follows premises to their conclusion, laughing, or, rather, grinning all the time. If marriage does not bind, how absurd it is, he says. If it does bind and it inconveniences you, how absurd it is still, if the Christian belief is a myth! He shocks people by making objective the abstractions which their inclinations nurse, and which they do not dare to put into action.

The play which is interesting New York and horrifying Mr. McAdoo, is a story which any school girl may read at the breakfast table if her father will let her have the morning newspaper. Only,—the paper makes it brutal, and that,—if she understands,—may repell her;—Mr. Shaw laughs at the horrors

so that they do not seem so horrible. The profession of the female in Mr. Shaw's fashionable play is the most nefarious known to the human race. But, he seems to say, grinning.—Why should you who think that right and wrong are matters of desire or expediency, object to anything? The woman in the play is nefarious, her circle is nefarious;—here is an Anglican clergyman, too, who has sinned, who is unrepentant. Is he any better at heart than the creatures who go on being openly unrepentant and nefarious? If there is no God,—no Court of Rule, no Court of Appeal, no system of ethics,—nothing makes any difference! You go as you please!—and Shaw laughs, and makes epigrams, as only a Celt or a Frenchman can make them, and is mercilessly logical. Then he dives deep into the mud, and very gracefully spatters it over the gilded idols which supercivilized society is "pretending to adore!"

The real evil is not with Mr. Shaw. In a society in which a woman can be divorced at twelve o'clock and be "married" at two, and then appear everywhere, jewelled and acknowledged, received and uncensored, Mr. Shaw ought not to be stoned. In a social condition in which the youngest boy or girl is permitted to read every day details of horrors that deserve to be unspeakable, the mockery of Mr. Shaw is virtue itself to the complaisance of the cowardly, who condone adultery because it is opulent and shrink from vice when it happens to be poor.

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VATICAN ATHLETICS

Pope Pius Discourses on Value of Physical Exercise

The Vatican has been in the hands of the athletic youths of Italy for the last three days writes the Tablet correspondent from Rome, under date of Sunday, October 8. Several hundreds of picked youths from Catholic clubs and colleges all over Italy have been here for the first really great national athletic gathering ever assembled in this country. They have had bicycle races, running, walking, jumping, gymnastics of all kinds, and their contests have been watched with great interest by some of the highest officials of the Vatican. Cardinal Merry del Val stole several hours from his grave cares of State to be present at the games, and Mgr. Bisleti was specially told off by the Holy Father to give an account of how things went. But the ceremonies of to-day might be called the apotheosis of muscular Christianity in Rome.

The youths gathered this morning in the Church of Sant' Ignazio to assist at the mass celebrated for them by Cardinal Cavagnis, and from there marched in serried ranks preceded by a fine band to the Vatican. By ten o'clock they were all lined along the loggia on the first floor awaiting the arrival of the Holy Father.

When His Holiness made his appearance, he was greeted with a lusty cheer. He gave his hand to kiss to each of the young men in turn, pausing here and there to ask details about some of the clubs, or to say a few words of praise to one or other of the victors in the recent contests. The solemn reception took place a few minutes later in the Sala Regia, and it was noticeable that the Pope had elected to give it special importance, for he was attended by his maestro di camera, majordomo, several chamberlains and pickets of Noble and Swiss Guards.

The president of the committee of the athletic gathering then read a brief address to the Holy Father, and begged His Holiness to say a few words to the young men. Unfortunately the Sala Regia had been divided for the occasion in such a way that many of the youths could not hear a word of the address. There was some confusion among them which was brought to a sudden end when the Pope, before beginning to speak, warned the noisy members of the throng that if they could not keep silence the door was open for them. After that you might have heard a pin drop.

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"I am glad," said Pius X., "to find myself among you, for I consider myself as a companion and friend with you. I bless your games and your athletic exercises. While they make your bodies healthy and strong, they are certain also to have a powerful and beneficent influence on your minds. Physical exercises, occupying your bodies and your minds, will keep you from idleness, which is the father of all the vices. Recalling the words of the youngest of the Apostles, so dear to Jesus Christ, I exhort you to be strong in keeping and defending your faith, strong in combating temptations, strong in overcoming the obstacles that lie in your path. Do not be afraid that in asking you to be good and religious I would deprive you of your pastimes or require of you great sacrifices beyond your years; on the contrary, I wish you to have recreation of body and of mind, which is necessary for you, so that in the autumn of your life you may be able to reap the fruit of a healthy springtime. The foundation of all your work must be love of God, for in piety you will find strength to fulfill your apostolate, and remember that your apostolate is first of all that of affording a good example, which is of far greater avail than preaching." And the Holy Father quoted poets and philosophers to show the poor figure cut by him who preaches well but practises badly. The world is not quite so bad as pessimists paint it to-day, but it is unhappily true that a great many have come to forget the golden maxim: Do unto others as you would be done by. All this is due to the lack of the religious principle. "I earnestly exhort you all, therefore," the Pope concluded, "to be good Catholics in deed as well as in name. Don't be afraid of the ridicule that the irreligious may try to cast upon you, for the religious spirit you show—they will, in the end, be forced to do homage to your virtue."

All went on their knees as Pius solemnly called down on them and

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their organization the blessings of God, and three rousing cheers finished the function. Before leaving them the Holy Father stopped a few moments to congratulate the youths of the club "Giovane Roma," whose candidates carried off the greater part of the athletic honors of the last few days.

This afternoon it looked as if the rain were bent on spoiling the distribution of prizes in the Cortile of San Damaso, where a temporary throne and platform had been erected for the occasion. Fortunately the clouds broke just in time, and the Holy Father appeared again before the eager athletes, surrounded with the same pomp as in the morning, and this time accompanied by Cardinal Merry del Val and by Archbishop Bourne of London. A number of gymnastic exercises were gone through, and then His Holiness conferred the four principal prizes on the winning clubs amid great applause. Among the other prizes which have been awarded this evening were a beautiful oil-painting, offered by Cardinal Merry del Val, gold and silver medals presented by Cardinal Respighi, Vicar-General to His Holiness; a beautiful album, the gift of Cardinal Cavagnis, and a set of cut glass offered by Mgr. della Chiesa, the vice-secretary of state.

The Liberal papers have devoted a great deal of space to the proceedings, and many of them have urged on the Government the necessity of rivaling the Pope in his encouragement of athletics among the youth of Italy.

A REMARKABLE CHURCH

Notre Dame de Bonsecours, Montreal, Has Unique History

High on the bank of the St. Lawrence, at Montreal, stands a quaint little old church that dates back to 1657. It is known as Notre Dame de Bonsecours. From the land side it is very unpretentious, but on the river side, far aloft, stands a great golden image of Our Lady of Good Succor and there is scarce a pilot or a boatman on the river who passes it without crossing himself. One who steps into the dimly lighted interior will be struck by the rows of miniature ships swung from the overhead arches, each bearing always a burning taper. One who cares to make enquiry will hear a quaint story.

In the beginning, the church was a place where all good Catholics might go to say their prayers, make confession and give their alms. There were always river men and ship men among the pious visitors. Then back in the days of the struggles of the Pope to retain his temporal power, a company of French Canadian Zouaves went from Montreal to offer their services to the Church. In mid-seas their ship was overtaken by a great storm, and only by the merest good chance did they reach Italy in safety. On their return to Canada they had made a small ship of silver, which was given as a thanks offering to this church on the river bank, and hung in

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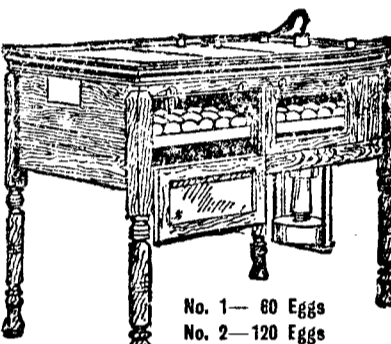
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the sanctuary, where a light burns perpetually in remembrance of the succor of the Virgin in time of need. Since then various pilots and others who sail on the river have presented similar ships from time to time, until now a double row swings above the worshippers' heads. And the church has come to be known by the name that every sailor on the river loves.—Exchange.

Some Scottish Signs

The signs put up by "sma' merchants" in Scotland are often very amusing. An Aberdeen sign ran, "Fresh Butter and Eggs Laid Here Daily by Betsy Smith." Another not far distant was, "Peats, Coals and Other Groceries Sold Here." In an East Lothian town an announcement was printed, "Balls and Marriage Parties Purveyed." —Ex.