

The Catholic Record

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Editor, Rev. James T. Foley, B.A.
Associate Editors: (Rev. D. A. Casey,
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LONDON, SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 1915

A LITTLE "LOCAL" TALK WITH SENSIBLE READERS

Two or three weeks ago an account of a religious profession appeared in our columns. Everyone knows that it is not always possible to regulate the affairs of one's own household to one's entire satisfaction. Let us say that the account aforesaid slipped in inadvertently. The fact, however, of its publication did not escape the observant eyes of our highly esteemed religious readers. They probably concluded that the RECORD had decided on a change of policy with regard to local news. Promptly, at any rate, came other similar accounts, somewhat belated because evidently the inspiration to send them was derived from the first published article. It hardly needs to be pointed out to our readers, religious and otherwise, that if from all the convents throughout the broad expanse of Canada such articles poured in our space for reading matter of general interest would become painfully restricted. Closing exercises in convents and colleges, parish affairs of great local interest, episcopal visitations, and many other such events of unquestioned religious interest locally, would please perhaps a hundred readers and weary a hundred thousand. The exclusion of purely local matter was the settled policy for many years of the late Senator Coffey. His long and, in Canada at least, unique experience as a Catholic journalist made it plain to him that as a matter of duty to the readers of the RECORD in general, items of merely local interest had to be excluded. All who knew his gentleness and consideration for the susceptibilities of any and every friend—and every reader of the RECORD was a friend—will agree that this duty, however plain, like most duties had its unpleasant side. The good sense, however, of our readers made it comparatively easy once its reason was understood.

The CATHOLIC RECORD is the national Catholic weekly of Canada. This is not a boast; it is a fact. We have more readers in St. John's, Newfoundland, for instance, than in London, Ontario. The RECORD circulates in every part of Canada from ocean to ocean. Without any solicitation whatever, without a single agent of any kind, purely motu proprio about fifteen hundred American citizens send in their subscriptions and read the RECORD. Presumably their friends do also; so we may count seven or eight thousand American readers. Why? Precisely, we are convinced, because its columns contain only such reading matter as might interest Catholics anywhere.

Our good friends will, therefore, understand that although a religious profession or a bishop's visitation is really one of the most striking evidences of religious vitality of the organic life of God's Holy Church; still religious professions and episcopal visitations occur so often, and the accounts, embellished though they always are by the piety and aesthetic sense of the writers, are necessarily so very nearly identical, that they come perilously near the "vain repetitions" which we are warned to avoid.

Than Catholic education no cause is dearer to the heart of the CATHOLIC RECORD; but a list of names is not inspiring; nor is it desirable to publish a glowing account of the good work of any one institution when so many others are doing work equally good.

Local papers must give space to local news; that is their reason for existence. The CATHOLIC RECORD is not a local paper. It is not the diocesan organ of London. As a Catholic paper, of course, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Ordin-

ary of the place of publication. And though the Bishop of London abdicates none of his rights in this or any other matter, he gives us a scope so free and untrammelled that we are made to feel that one thing only would entail the exercise of his unquestioned authority; and that one thing is not the expression of opinion divergent from his own, but the publication of matter or views unworthy of the Catholic name we bear.

Matters of general Catholic interest may, of course, sometimes have a local habitation and a name; we must throw ourselves on the good sense and reasonableness of our readers in general for a sensible and reasonable interpretation of a policy which experience has proved to be necessary and in their interest.

FEASTS AND FASTS

In noting (Jan. 2) the dispensation from fast and abstinence on Feast days we merely gave the substance of the Motu Proprio of Pius X., July 2nd, 1911.

Section V reads thus: "If, however, with any one of the Feasts which we wish preserved there should coincide a day of abstinence or fasting, we dispense in both, and we grant the same dispensation also for feasts of Patrons abolished by this law of ours, should it happen that they be celebrated solemnly and with a large attendance of people."

Though elsewhere in the decree the Holy Father refers to legitimate discontinuance or suppression of any of those feasts, it will be noted that Section V does not expressly restrict the dispensation to such feasts as are observed as holy days of obligation; but does expressly extend the privilege to Patronal feasts abolished as holy days of obligation. Hence it might appear that whether observed as feasts of obligation or not they would enjoy the privilege. On the other hand one feels instinctively that the reason for the dispensation is the incompatibility of feasting and fasting, and therefore where the Feast is not observed the obligation of Fasting or Abstinence remains.

The practical question was raised by a priest-subscriber. It is just such a question as one would think likely to arise immediately on the publication of the decree and be referred to the Holy See for authoritative decision. Unless overlooked it, however, the Ecclesiastical Review, excellent and accurate as it is, has not noted any such decision. We have referred the matter to its learned editor who will doubtless deal with the question if, indeed, he has not already done so. In the meantime in response to our inquiry the Rev. Dr. Meahan of St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, N. Y., promptly and courteously referred us to his article in the Catholic Encyclopedia *Supremi disciplinae*, in fine, where the matter is dealt with. More and more every day we find Index Volume of the Catholic Encyclopedia remarkably comprehensive and accurate. It multiplies the value of an extremely valuable work. Oddly enough, however, the Motu Proprio on Feast Days is indexed as on "pastoral theology." It occurs, also, under the Latin first words.

As a matter of fact the precise question we are considering was raised on the appearance of the Motu Proprio and was settled by a decree of the S. Congregation of the Council, 28th August of the same year, 1911. Dr. Meahan adds: "Why this decree was not generally published I can't understand. I struck it merely by chance." In his Encyclopedia article he indicates the "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" Nov. 11, 1911, as the source of his information on the explanatory decree.

The dispensation from fasting and abstinence does not extend to Feasts, such as the Assumption and SS. Peter and Paul in Canada, which are not observed as Feasts of obligation.

Another question on which we sought information was this: With regard to Patronal Feasts is there any extension of the dispensation for St. Patrick's Day to Irishmen outside of Ireland? This together with the previous question is answered in the subjoined letter from a scholarly young priest and appreciative reader of the RECORD. It is not without its interesting bearing on this exceptional case that the Rev. Dr. Meahan was indebted for his information as to the Holy See's decision to a French theological review while Dr. O'Gorman read it in a German periodical. Nor is it less interesting to know that the decision in question was given by the S. Cong. of the Council in answer to an inquiry of the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines—Cardinal Mercier—whose gentle and

heroic personality so fittingly represents martyred Belgium in the august senate of the Universal Church.

Editor THE CATHOLIC RECORD:

In order to complete your recent editorial concerning the general dispensation from the law of fasting and abstinence on the eight holy days of obligation, it should be noted that where one of these holidays is not solemnly observed, the dispensation ceases.

Thus in Canada two of the eight holidays of the Church are not observed, except on the following Sunday: SS. Peter and Paul, and the Assumption. The 29th of July and the 15th of August are not holidays of obligation in Canada, nor are they generally observed by popular religious celebrations. Hence should one of those days fall on a Friday, abstinence must be observed on that day. The authority for this statement is an answer from the Sacred Congregation of the Council to the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, dated August 28, 1911, cited in the German periodical, *Pastor Bonus*, Aug. 1913. Strange to say this decision was not published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* and hence would seem to be not very generally known. Some mistakes were made in this regard on Friday, August 15, 1913.

On the other hand it is interesting to note, that when a feast, which is not a holiday of obligation, is celebrated by a large number of people in a religious manner as, for example, March 17, in many parts of Canada, the Bishop of a diocese can, if he sees fit, dispense with the law of fast and abstinence on that day. Thus a Bishop could permit meat at a St. Patrick's Day Banquet this year, though St. Patrick's Day falls on a Wednesday of Lent. However as regards the expediency of such an act, the Bishop himself alone is judge. J. J. O'G.

FEASTING AND FASTING ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY

While Dr. O'Gorman's letter in the preceding article briefly indicates how this matter stands, he was good enough to accede to our request for a fuller treatment of the question with citation of authorities; and so prompt that his article reached us in time for this issue of the RECORD. Many will read it with great interest. For those who are interested only in the practical conclusion we might state that while for many years bishops might dispense for a weighty reason, the decrees of 1911 and 1912 make it clear that the usual celebration of St. Patrick's Day is unquestionably a sufficient reason for dispensation. In practice, therefore, if like good Irishmen you assist at Mass in the morning, apply to the bishop when Feasting and Fasting conflict on St. Patrick's Day. At home and abroad the sea divided Gael have always observed St. Patrick's Day religiously as well as festively. May it always remain in practice a religious as well as a national festival.

Editor CATHOLIC RECORD:

Apart from the suspension of the law of fasting and abstinence on the holidays of obligation, which are kept as such, there have been no other papal decrees mitigating the law of fasting and abstinence. Leo XIII. (decrees of 5 December, 1894, and 18 March, 1898) gave bishops the power of dispensing from fasting and abstinence, for weighty reasons, on patronal or other feasts celebrated by a great number of people, even in a single city or parish. The same applies to pilgrimages, centenaries and other extraordinary festivals. A weighty reason would be the difficulty of observing the law on those occasions or the danger that it would be broken. Unless the bishop expressly dispenses, the general law remains of course in full force on those occasions.

A decree of 3 May, 1912, gives bishops still further authority in this matter. If one of the holidays of obligation which were suppressed by Pius X. when he reduced the total number to eight (2 July, 1911) be still celebrated as a feast day of devotion by a large number of people, a bishop can dispense from fasting and abstinence on such a day. For example, if the Feast of Corpus Christi, which till 1892 was a holiday of obligation in part of Canada, and which is no longer a holiday of obligation anywhere, were celebrated here as a great feast day—if people attended Mass on that day, and took part in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament on that day—then a bishop could dispense from fasting and abstinence on such a day. The feast of St. John the Baptist, Patron of French Canadians, which is celebrated with some solemnity in many parishes, would be a case in point. The last mentioned decree would appear to give to bishops yet wider power. While the preamble refers only to feasts that were formerly holidays of obligation, the formal part of the decree is much more

general: "Ordinaries of all places are granted the ample faculty of dispensing their subjects from the law of fasting and abstinence, whenever a fast day or a day of abstinence falls on a feast, which, although not of obligation, is celebrated devoutly by a sufficient number of people" (3 May, 1912). By virtue of this decree it would appear that a bishop could dispense from fasting and abstinence on St. Patrick's Day, in those parishes where it is kept by a holiday—that is where a large number of people attend Mass on that day. Leo XIII. had required a weighty reason for such a dispensation. Pius X. gives us a sufficient reason, "that the faithful may be more and more incited to celebrate the above mentioned feast days in a pious and holy manner."

It is difficult, and slightly incongruous to feast and fast on the same day. Hence where the people keep a day as a religious feast day, the Church gives her bishops ample facilities of dispensing from fasting. On the other hand it is somewhat incongruous to feast in Lent. St. Patrick's day, however, always falls in Lent. So, except it should fall in Holy Week (in which case it would either not be liturgically observed or where it is observed as a first class feast, be transferred) there would appear to be no reason why a Bishop could not, if he see fit, dispense from fasting and abstinence on St. Patrick's day in those parishes where it is observed as a religious feast. He, however, alone is judge as to the advisability or inadvisability of such a dispensation. When a special dispensation is granted, it is announced in each parish by the parish priest. As days of fast and abstinence are regularly announced in all parish churches, the Catholic layman can not fail to know on what days he is obliged to fast or abstain.

ENGLAND AND THE VATICAN

The appointment by the British Government of an Ambassador to the Vatican has aroused the bigoted ire of the anti-Catholic maniac, Protest from certain quarters was to be expected. Like some evil-smelling animal, the ignorant partizan awaits such opportunities to creep forth from his lair and scatter broadcast his venomous filth. The action of the Protestant Alliance, therefore, causes but little surprise. Nor is the denunciation of the Northern Church Council against a "mission which cannot but give grave offence to a vast majority of Englishmen" deserving of any more notice. But that a journal of the character and influence of the London Daily News should consider itself bound to rebuke the Cabinet for making such an appointment surpasses our comprehension. In an article worthy of an Orange oration at the Boyne celebration it condemns the Government for this recognition of the Vatican, and works itself into a white heat over what it is pleased to term "this extraordinary and indefensible departure." We are at a loss to understand this "extraordinary and indefensible" attitude of the great Liberal organ. Henceforth it would seem that we are to bracket the Daily News with that famous exponent of broad-mindedness and toleration, the Orange Sentinel.

The article in the News is evidently inspired by Dr. Clifford, the head of the Nonconformist body in Britain. It is but an echo of the doctor's declaration that care must be taken that the "chains which were flung off years ago are not fastened upon us again during this European strife," and that a protest must be made against this "reactionary" step. Dr. Clifford's outburst is perfectly in keeping with the Nonconformist attitude on all controversial questions. Like the "brethren" who preach equal rights and practice the most rigid boycott of all who do not see eye to eye with themselves, they are all for broad-mindedness and toleration in theory, the while they invariably reveal themselves as the most bigoted, intolerant and narrow-minded body in the community. But the Daily News ought to know better than to lend itself to the propagation of sectarian bitterness.

Whilst Dr. Clifford's motive is so transparent his reasoning is not quite so self-evident. Germany, Russia, and Turkey, three countries which are not Catholic, are represented at the Vatican. Are we to take it that the doctor believes these three countries are chained to the Papal tiara? Serbia has concluded a concordat with the Pope, and is about to send a minister

to the Papal Court. Is Serbia, too, a slave to the Roman Pontiff? France is supposed to be busy with preparations preliminary to a renewal of relations with the Vatican. Is the France that refuses to recognize a God the bonded slave of Rome? Belgium has, of course, her minister at the Holy See. If Dr. Clifford is right the Belgians are reactionaries and an enslaved people. Does the Nonconformist believe that England is justified in participating in this war? If so how can his conscience approve of the spending of blood and treasure in defence of a nation of reactionaries and Papal slaves? Will he dare tell us that because the Belgians bent the knee to Rome that therefore they could not play a free man's part in defence of king and country? Does his anti-Catholic bias blind him to the fact that these Catholic reactionaries saved Protestant England from the horrors of invasion? It may be due to the lack of the logical sense but we confess ourselves unable to follow the doctor's line of argument.

We must not be taken as attaching too much importance to the idle vapourings of diseased minds.

They are not representative of the sober thought of fair minded Englishmen. And we feel confident that the Government will teach them a lesson by utterly disregarding their mischievous and silly protest. The interests of the world-wide Empire demand the presence of a British representative at the Vatican. At a time of crisis like the present questions are sure to arise that cannot be satisfactorily settled if the Father of Christendom is ignored. And long after the battle flag is furled the personal representative of the British Government at the Vatican will be found to be a tower of strength to the Empire's cause. The men who are trying to fan the dying embers of bigotry, and thus create disunion in the body politic would be more honorably employed fighting in defence of the Empire, side by side with the thousands of brave Catholics who, even though they be "reactionaries," know at least how to die for the flag.

COLUMBA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN RECOGNITION of what Belgium has done for France by stemming the German tide of invasion at the opening of the War, the women of France, through the Comtesse de Saint-Laurent, have in the name of 40,000 members of the Ligue des Femmes Francaises, of which the Comtesse is President-General, sent an address to the Queen of the Belgians, together with a medal bearing the impress of the Sacred Heart and of Mary Immaculate. May it not be that through the War and the sacrifices it has entailed upon both France and Belgium, the former may as a nation renew once more her active fealty to the Faith that has inscribed the most glorious passages of her history.

IT IS FROM Austria that there comes to us tidings of a foreign mission apostolate that should be an inspiration to the Catholics of this Continent. There is a paper there devoted particularly to the needs of the missions in India. Its proprietor and editor is a layman, H. Sountag, who for ten years has devoted his energy and all his resources to this great cause. He lives alone in very simple lodgings, does his own frugal cooking, and keeps no servant, in order to save money for India. He employs but one clerk, with whose assistance the paper is written, printed, and sent broadcast on its mission of charity. He rarely rides in a carriage or other conveyance, making his rounds on foot and laying aside every farthing saved for the cause to which he has devoted his life. He visits every Catholic that can afford anything, speaks to them of the missions with great zeal and enthusiasm and usually succeeds in obtaining an offering. By these means Mr. Sountag succeeded during the year 1913 in saving and collecting personally no less a sum than 23,186 crowns, all of which was placed at the disposal of the Catholic Missions in India.

SUCH AN apostolate, pursued without intermission for several years, and always with the approbation of his diocesan authorities and under the special blessing of the Holy See, must have rendered quite incalculable service to the cause which its conductor has so much at heart. And although the War will have greatly impeded its progress—perhaps, for the time being, have put an end to it altogether—its effect will remain in

the inspiration which it will have given to others more happily circumstanced, to emulate Mr. Sountag in his zeal for the spread of the Kingdom of God on earth. That it has certainly already done so in India itself is evident from the increased prominence given to mission work in the India Catholic press. A movement has been started to establish the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in that country and to raise the sum of 400,000 rupees in order that missions already established among the native races may not suffer through the falling off of contributions from Europe—an inevitable consequence of the great conflict.

PROFESSOR SAYCE of Oxford University, whose name is familiar to the world of science and of letters, has written to the London Times on the subject of German culture. It is, he says, astonishing that British scholars and politicians should still speak of "our intellectual debt to Germany," and he proceeds to examine in the dry light of reason the Teutonic claim to intellectual pre-eminence so sedulously maintained by Germans themselves and by the younger generation of professional men who have sat obediently at the feet of Teutonic professors.

IN LITERATURE, Professor Sayce concedes Goethe to Germany as occupying almost the first rank. Heyne was a Jew who regarded the Germans as barbarians. Schiller, the most characteristic of German writers, was but a "milk-and-water Longfellow." In philosophy, there were Kant and Hegel, but Kant was more than half Scottish in origin, and his philosophy purely destructive in character and tendency. His subjectivism as formulated in the Critique of Pure Reason and others of his writings, may indeed be said to have laid the foundation of every modern atheistic cult. What the Hegelian philosophy would have been "had the German language been more cultivated" Prof. Sayce thinks it difficult to estimate.

IN SCIENCE BUT one of the great names is German. We look in vain for any except Mendel that can be put by the side of Newton, Darwin, Faraday, Laplace or Pasteur. Even in mechanical science hardly one of the great inventions of modern times is German. The steam engine, the telegraph and telephone, the motor car, the aeroplane, the wireless telegraph, the electric light, the phonograph—everyone of them was born out of Germany. The Germans certainly have had the faculty of adapting the inventions of others, and of making them commercially profitable, but the initiative belongs mainly to Britain, to France and to the United States, with Italy not far behind.

IN ARCHAEOLOGY, for which department of research Prof. Sayce if any is entitled to speak with authority, pre-eminence is accorded mainly to French and British scholars. It was Dr. Richard Lepsius, one of Germany's foremost Egyptologists and a gentleman of the old school who said as late as 1881: "When we come across a new inscription we first get Dr. Birch (keeper of the Oriental Department of the British Museum) to decipher it, and then we can analyze it philologically"—an admission that went further than the newer school of German savants would be willing to concede, but which remains unshaken nevertheless.

IT MAY BE said that in the department of History at least German pre-eminence is unassailable. This is only qualifiedly true. In laboriously counting syllables and words and piling up volumes of indices the German has perhaps made a solitary place for himself, but despite the industry of Ranke, and Pastor, and of numerous others they have no name in this generation to outshine Gaidner and Gaquet in England, or Martin, Ampère and Duchesne in France. The work of the Bollandists is mainly Belgian.

GERMANY CERTAINLY has excelled in Music, and she possesses some great names in the realm of Art, which are not, however, of this generation. As Professor Sayce truly remarks, a people who have ruthlessly and senselessly destroyed the art treasures of Belgium and France, who have deliberately turned their guns upon the most sacred of buildings, and laid in ashes the architectural glories of by-gone generations; and have wantonly put to the flames

books and manuscripts which can never be replaced, have forfeited all claim to superiority in culture and civilization. Rather have they put themselves outside the pale of both.

ONE of the most conspicuous features of the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, recently opened in Toronto, is a niche over the main entrance for, presumably, a statue of the founder of "Canada's Biggest Store." The passer-by not in the secret of the Methodist conscience might not unreasonably wonder what John Wesley, could he resume his earthly tabernacle, would think of this latest development of the sect which he founded. The sumptuous edifice, upon the erection of which no expense has been spared, and no available luxuries appointment omitted, would of itself make him stare. Plainness and simplicity were, until the present generation, the boasted distinguishing badge of Methodism, but the desire to have "a king like other nations," has finally triumphed, and now the pendulum has swung full. If John Wesley would not feel at home in the Eaton Memorial as it stands, what would he think of the statue of "St. Timothy," holding in his hand a Friday bargain as the symbol of his commercial sovereignty?

ON THE BATTLE LINE

IN THE EAST

On the Eastern front the great struggle develops unexpected, almost unthought for, resourcefulness and strength on the part of Russia. Grand Duke Nicholas is embarking on another bold stroke. Leaving the Germans in their trenches before Warsaw, he has sent a force through North Poland in the direction of Thorn, in Prussia, and this force has so far been driving all before it. On Thursday night it was reported at Serpetz, 21 miles north of Plock. Last night it had reached the Skwa River, only 40 miles from Thorn, and the German cavalry was retiring before it.

There are two great results which may follow this movement. In the first place, in conjunction with the army that has invaded East Prussia to the north, it brings the German forces around Mlawa between two fires; to use the general statement it catches them as in a vice. The defeat of the German force at Mlawa and a junction of the two Russian armies moving upon Prussia might prove one of the most far-reaching events yet produced in the East. But there is another effect even more immediate of the movement towards Thorn, that is that it brings a powerful Russian army in the rear of Von Hindenburg's force before Warsaw and makes an entire change in the situation in that quarter.

Berlin sent out a lot of information yesterday, some of which may be true. One item speaks of the "terrible losses" sustained by Russia in the second stage of Przemyel. It is estimated that over 10,000 Russians have been killed since the siege was resumed. Of late their activity is said to have subsided. They have probably decided that famine will do their work better than the bayonet.

The Morning Post correspondent at Petrograd says that the Germans, since the roads hardened, have succeeded in bringing up 11-inch mortars to the battle line in front of Warsaw, and are furiously bombarding the Russian positions. He believes this means an almost immediate general assault. The supreme effort of Von Hindenburg, therefore, may now be in progress.—Globe, Jan. 15.

ON THE WESTERN FRONT

(Special Cable Dispatch to the Globe)

GERMAN SUCCESS

London, Jan. 15.—The violent German attack conducted under the direction of the Kaiser and the German General Staff by General Von Kluck is easily the most striking news from the western theatre.

Strong reinforcements drawn from the right and left flanks of the German centre army combined with the intervention of the flood stage of the River Aisne, which imperilled the lines of communication of the French, preventing them from bringing up added forces to meet the increased superior strength of the invaders, made possible the German success, say British students of the progress of the revival of the Aisne battle.

The German statement asserts that by continuous fighting they were able to take the towns of Cuffies, Bucy-le-Long, Missy Vauxrot and Vellerie, all to the north and north-east of Soissons. These captures indicate that the French were driven in order from one after another of their positions on the three roads leading to the north from Soissons and from the river road which parallels the Aisne.

It will take weeks for the French to repair the loss of the bridges, even if they are able to hold the Germans to the north bank of the stream.

Berlin, Jan. 15.—Today's reports from army headquarters reveal the fact that fighting on the east of Soissons, part of which was witnessed by the Kaiser, has resulted in a much