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LONDON, SATURDAY, JAN. 3, 1920

REVIVING MEDIAEVAL MORALITIES AND MIRACLES

"Nothing under the sun is new, neither is any man able to say: Behold, this is new; for it hath already gone before in the ages that were before us."

Never, perhaps, was there a more striking exemplification of this oft-quoted text than the "The Wayfarer," a pageant now being presented at Madison Square Garden, New York. It is advertised as a greatly daring innovation of a Seattle clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Crowther, who is the author of the play. Failing to reach from the pulpit the masses of workers whose discontent was fanned into a flame by agitators, he turned to the stage as a means of instruction and enlightenment on the problems of life. The Inter-Church World Movement then took up the idea. There was at first opposition from a number of the Bishops of the churches to the dramatization of Biblical subjects, but the success of the method removed their opposition.

The scope and movement of the play is thus described by an enthusiastic advocate of this method of teaching the people the Christian conception of life and its problems:

"The ringing keynote in the pageant, 'The Wayfarer,' is the similarity of our conditions with conditions in the various progressive stages of civilization. The conclusion indicated is that it is but a matter of time before things will settle down to their true levels. The opening scene is laid in Flanders fields, after a battle has been fought. The ground is strewn with figures of the slain and wounded. It is then that the Wayfarer, who typifies any man, begins his plaint against the injustice and inhumanity of the world. He rails against the powers that be, human and superhuman, and demands to know the reason for all of the suffering and misery of the world. He is encompassed by the influence of Despair, who fills him with the hopelessness and injustice of life. Understanding, however, comes to him through his traveling back into the centuries where the various incidents of human struggle are depicted to him. He sees that the aftermath of war is always unrest, but that after unrest there is peace. The Jews in Babylon form one episode in the pageant. The climax is the story of Christ and the Passion. Then the Wayfarer is brought back into the present with new appreciation and new understanding of the forces that control human progress."

Heralded as a great innovation this is nothing but a revival of the Miracle plays and Mysteries of the Middle Ages with their later complementary development—the Moralities. In England all religious plays were called "miracles," a word which had not its usual present day connotation. In the miracles or mysteries were presented to the people scenes from the Bible, the dogmatic truths of God's revelation to man, and they finally represented the whole course of sacred history from the Creation to the Last Judgment.

The Moralities on the other hand aimed at the inculcation of ethical truths, and the *dramatis personae* are abstract personifications, such as Virtue, Good Works, the Seven Deadly Sins, etc. Many of our readers will have seen "Everyman," which is a fifteenth century morality. More still will probably have seen "Everywoman," a modern adaptation of the mediaeval morality, lacking, however,

the severely simple, clearcut and unquestioned lines of demarcation between right and wrong, between truth and error, which characterized the mediaeval play.

These mediaeval miracles or mysteries, "at least in the Old and New Testament cycles," says a writer on the subject, "followed a previously traced out path, from which they could with difficulty depart since the foundation was borrowed from Holy Scripture. The traditional doctrine and the august characters had to be respected. But, to offset this handicap, what exalted, dramatic, and affecting subjects were theirs! These poets recalled not only the events of this world, but depicted before their audience the terrors and hopes of the next. They set forth at the same time heaven, earth, and hell, and this enormous subject gave occasion for scenes of powerful interest. The scenes of the Passion are surely the most wonderful, the most moving, and the most beautiful that can be enacted on earth. The poet lacked art, but he was saved by his subject, as Saint Beuve has observed, and from time to time became sublime in spite of himself. And what the spectator saw was not fiction but the holy realities which from his childhood he had learned to venerate. What was put before his eyes was most calculated to affect him, the doctrines of his faith, the consolations it afforded in the sorrows of this life, and the immortal joys it promised in the next. Hence the great success of these performances. It was an enviable honor for all ranks and classes to take part. The greatest celebration a city could indulge in on a solemn occasion was to play the Passion. The entire population crowded to the spectacle, the city was deserted."

So "The Wayfarer" goes back to the ages of faith for its inspiration in its "novel" method of dramatizing revealed truth. "The climax," we are told, "is the story of Christ and the Passion." So was it many centuries ago; and so it is yet in Catholic parts of the world where the mediaeval spirit of faith, piety and reverence is preserved. Even the name is thoroughly Catholic and mediaeval. Visitor or Wayfarer was in common use to emphasize the commonly held truth that we have not here a lasting habitation, but we are mere wayfarers on our brief journey through this life to eternity. It was the Reformation that sapped the life of the mediaeval religious drama. Now that the Reformation has run its course we have Protestants rediscovering the unknown and long contemned customs of the Faith of their forefathers.

The members of the Industrial Relations Committee of the Inter-church World Movement came, we are told, "to the decision that in order to present the vital question of the day to large masses of people they must make an appeal first to the aesthetic sense and allow reasonable conclusions to grow out of that."

That is an old old story with the Catholic Church. Her liturgy, her ceremonial, her architecture, her art, her music—all are an appeal to the aesthetic sense out of which reasonable conclusions must and do grow. However it must not be too readily concluded that our modern mediaevalists are seized of the mediaeval spirit; the spirit of that faith which moves mountains, the spirit of the wayfarer who in very truth feels that this life is but a journey to eternity, that this world is but a world of shadows compared with the eternal realities of the world to come.

This passage from the article on "The Wayfarer" has a very distinct—and let us add, a very disappointing and disheartening—worldly flavor:

"The interest in vital current subjects has ceased to be limited to small academic circles. Everybody is talking about them. Out of this interest something constructive or destructive will grow. If the education of the people at large is left to agitators and propagandists of a foreign regime, we will undoubtedly get something that tends to undermine the strength of the country. If, however, the popular interest of current problems is steered along sane and constructive lines, the Red leaders will find themselves unwelcome guests in this country, and the great mass of American people will be ready to fall into step in the march of progress and prosperity that is surely ahead of us."

Christian civilization was reared by faith, built on faith; it can never be saved by that half-naked materialism which would make the tremendous truths of Christian revelation a useful prop for "progress and prosperity."

THE HOME RULE BILL

Whether the Home Rule Bill now proposed by the Lloyd George Government is a sincere attempt according to British ideas to solve the Irish question, or whether it is an insincere attempt to appease the conscience of the world outraged by the brutal and bloody repression of Ireland, it is impossible to decide on the meagre general outline of the measure so far given out. Final judgment must wait fuller information. In any other country on earth a full and free Constituent Assembly, and not the enemies and oppressors of the country, would decide its form of government.

President Wilson, with the acclaim of all liberty-loving people, with the assent of the allied and associated powers, again and again proclaimed that the object of the War was to secure liberty for all oppressed peoples, to establish the supremacy of right over might, and to have governments recognize that all their just rights came from the consent of the governed.

Could this spokesman of the aims and objects of the War have more clearly indicated Ireland than when he said: "With peace there must come liberty to all the oppressed people of the earth, whether they suffered under the government of those with whom we are fighting or those who fought on the same side with us."

On the heels of the War, fought and won to make the world safe for democracy, we have the shameless, the cynical disregard for all professions, so far as Ireland is concerned, that called for this scathing denunciation from Sir Horace Plunkett:

"People who dare to protest against a regime which would not be tolerated for a moment by white people in any other part of the British Empire, are ruthlessly incarcerated."

And Sir Horace Plunkett is free in England, in London, to protest, as he does protest, against "this monstrous substitute for statesmanship."

Mr. Asquith, a passage from whose recent speech we publish elsewhere in this issue, thus expresses the humiliation of honest Englishmen at British Prussianism in Ireland:

"While extending liberty to other European nationalities, we had sustained the unspeakable humiliation of witnessing—as the whole world had witnessed—at our own doors our fellow subjects in Ireland made the victims of a crude and clumsily administered system of military law."

In a word we were back to the worst days of Coercion unveiled and unashamed.

To cap the climax of the deliberate and malicious campaign of vilification of the Irish Nationalists is the use made of the insane attempt—or pretence—to assassinate the Lord Lieutenant. Whether this grocer's clerk who was killed was the dupe or tool of the *agent provocateur* or a half-crazy fanatic, there is no other country in the world where his murder-mania would be attributed to his fellow-countrymen as their deliberate policy. Such attempts—often successful—have occurred in England, in the United States, in France, in Germany, in practically every country, but in not a single case was there any disposition to regard the insane folly as reflecting on the whole people.

A few days after the attempt on the life of Lord French the cable informed us that there was a band of assassins in every parish in Ireland! We really cannot refrain from quoting at length; it indicates the illimitable confidence of a certain British clique in its indefatigable propaganda, and the unfathomable credulity which it believes to exist on this side of the Atlantic. Well they are playing a desperate game and must make some concessions to public conscience. If people on this side would only believe a tithe of what is cabled over, sympathy for Ireland would be turned into execration. This is the despatch:

"Today in Ireland there exists in virtually every district and in virtually every parish an assassination club. These bands of murderers would appear to be well organized, and possibly they act in harmony. However this may be, they are possessed of an intelligence department, widespread in its reach, and perfect almost to a miracle. How else may one account for their close intimacy with the Lord-Lieutenant's movements?"

"It was said once, half by way of jest and half in truth, that not a fly could cross the atmosphere of Ireland but the Royal Irish Constabulary would report it. The intelligence department that today serves the

Sinn Féin and its extreme associates is even more efficient. It honeycombs the Irish civil service, and there is nothing hidden that to the Sinn Féin shall not be revealed. There is leakage everywhere, enough of it to sink a ship. No wonder Lord French's movements became known to the assassins who on Friday sought to take his life."

The *agent provocateur* is not unknown in Ireland; and the fact that this band of thirty—we believe that from five the estimate finally went to thirty—practically well informed assassins should have unanimously and unmistakably fired on the second car, which was empty, and that not one of them has been arrested, indicates what our American friends would call a "frame-up."

It admirably caps the climax of the long series of slanders, and comes most opportunely for the mock-heros of Lloyd George and Bonar Law in presenting their emasculated Home Rule Bill.

Whether it was staged for the occasion, or whether it is one of those minor outrages which the great outrage of the oppression of a whole people inevitably provokes, it is certain that it was the work of an enemy of Ireland.

THAT ULSTER DELEGATION

A Belfast despatch of some weeks ago to the New York World has just been brought to our attention. It relates to the delegation of Ulster clergymen now touring the United States and promising a visit to Canada before their return to Ireland.

The burden of the despatch is that these reverend gentlemen were not delegated by the Protestants of Ulster and are not representative of the religious bodies to which they belong.

"The Americans," reads the despatch to the World, "who are asked to accept these gentlemen as representing Irish Protestantism of all denominations, or even the United Protestantism of Ulster, should consider the circumstances of their selection as well as their constitution. They were not selected by any public meeting of the creeds to which they belong, but by the Belfast Orange clique to which at least three and perhaps four of them belong. They are noted for their extreme views even among Orangemen."

"The only meeting called in connection with the delegation was at the May Street Church here and this was to announce that the pastor of that church had been selected to join the delegation. This meeting consisted solely of Orangemen and Unionists, none of the numerous Protestant Liberals and Home Rulers among the clergy was present or consulted."

The despatch goes on to quote the Liberal organ of Ulster, a Presbyterian paper, which repudiates the delegation because its whole stock in trade will be the religious argument "which Ulster Protestant Liberals know to be a false argument."

Commenting on the absurdly disproportionate number of Methodist clergymen the World's correspondent says:

"This overrepresentation of the Methodists is because the Methodist body in America is known to be so powerful and the whole idea of the delegation, as conceived by Lord Beaverbrook, is to inflame Methodist feeling on religious grounds against Ireland's demand for Home Rule."

And the despatch concludes with the terse statement that the delegation represents only one section of Irish Protestantism, "that which preaches and practices intolerance against their Catholic fellow-countrymen."

In tracing the brilliant idea to Lord Beaverbrook's fertile brain we quoted from his own pen in his own newspaper his own shameless avowal of his discreditable and unscrupulous purpose. It is already apparent that the noble lord underestimated the intelligence of American Methodists; for comparatively very few of them have shown any eagerness to swallow their American principles of self-government in response to a dishonest appeal to religious animosity.

REPUDIATING THE PAST

BY THE OBSERVER

If we deny or repudiate the experience of the past, we must begin all over again to acquire knowledge. Such a proceeding if it were possible, would be intelligible at least.

But the attitude and acts of many men who imagine they are leaders of modern thought, puzzle the reason. Not only are they eager to repudiate the past, with its wealth of slowly and painfully gathered experience

and knowledge: they feel that, in some mysterious manner, not known even to themselves, they have become possessed of knowledge which will take the place of all the wisdom of all the ages.

It is not uncommon nowadays for some self-complacent young legislator to introduce in a parliament or a legislature a bill which, if passed, would abolish a principle of law which has existed in our jurisprudence for centuries and which no genuine student of law or government has ever questioned. What are his qualifications for passing judgment in the matter? Sometimes, they are very doubtful. Has he, in fact, made any real attempt to pass such judgment at all? Most usually, he has not. Has he seriously investigated the reasons, and the conditions, which gave rise to the law? Alas, he has not. Does he realize that there must have been certain reasons and conditions which originally led to the adoption of that principle into our jurisprudence? Alas and alack, he has never bothered his head with such a thought.

Most usually, the case is this: an ardent or ambitious young man is elected to parliament or to a legislature. He thinks he knows of some inequalities and some injustices which have become manifest in the application of the laws of the country to concrete and specific cases in the courts. Everyone knows of some such cases.

Laws are made in advance; they must necessarily be made in advance. If we could wait until a citizen did something; and if then, knowing just what he had done and how he had done it, we could pronounce upon it and remedy it if it needed a remedy; we could then go much nearer to doing perfect justice between man and man. But, if that were our way, no man could know beforehand whether the thing he thought of doing was or would be approved or allowed; and no man could safely do anything. So, laws must be made in advance of the actions they are intended to prevent or to regulate.

A legislator, therefore, is cast, partly, for the role of a prophet; he must try to take into consideration what men may do. His chief means of knowledge in that respect, is through the study of what men have done in the past. What they have done in the past, they will, or may, do again. But human acts are not all repetitions. Men originate new actions; and, particularly, they originate new ways of doing old actions; giving a novelty and a variety to their affairs which greatly complicate the consideration of cases, and involve much disputation and comparison when it comes to apply the law already existing to the new case that has thus arisen. The role of legislator is, therefore, a difficult one, if taken seriously and responsibly; and the best considered legislation frequently proves "inapplicable to the new cases that arise, for the purpose of doing justice. That involves the necessity of change; which is called amending the laws. It is here that the young and inexperienced legislator, eager to make a name, and sometimes filled with genuine concern for injustices unremedied, rises to shine. He will, he thinks, change all that is old, and make all things new, all things good, all things fair and reasonable and just. And that would be lovely, if it could be done; and he would indeed make a name for himself if he could do it.

But these things are difficult. The laws of a country are none the better, but much the worse for too frequent experimenting, especially at the hands of the inexperienced. Enthusiasm is a good thing; but it is sometimes dangerous; and occasionally disastrous. The changing affairs of mankind do undoubtedly require carefully considered changes in our laws. But there is altogether too much experimenting in legislation in Canada; particularly in the provincial legislatures. And, the ambitions of inexperienced law-makers, and the indifference or inattention of more experienced ones who do not take a sufficiently live interest in their duties as members, sometimes lead to the repeal of laws and the abolition of legal principles which have stood the test of time and experience, and which had far better remain part of the jurisprudence of the country.

No human law ever worked perfect justice. It does not follow that, because an occasional case goes without remedy that the law governing that case ought to be abolished or changed. Law is a rule for the

whole public; and a good law is a rule which works justice in a great majority of all the cases to which it is applied.

A wise law is aimed at the prevention of some certain injustice or some certain public mischief. Now, when such a law has been in force for a long time, the public gets used to it; the mischief intended to be prevented ceases, for the most part to happen. Then, one day, a case arises in which this law fails to do justice; and at once a clamor is made for its repeal; forgetting that, once it is repealed, the mischief it was originally made to prevent, will come up again.

Laws which have, on the whole, worked well; and especially main principles of law which form the basis and support of considerable portions of our social structure, ought not lightly to be repealed or altered.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE NARCOTIC CLINIC, a New York institution for the treatment of drug addicts, or, as they are more generally known, "dope fiends," seems to have attained to permanent status. The need has certainly brought the remedy. The Health Commissioner of that city expresses the conviction that "the drug question is of more importance to the people today than prohibition ever was." Unfortunately, in this country, prohibition has blinded many eyes to other and perhaps greater evils than the excessive use of intoxicants.

RECENT STATISTICS issued by the United States Census Bureau give the total of deaths in that country from automobile accidents for the year 1917, as 6,724. With the steady increase in the number of these vehicles in use, and especially with the great expansion in the motor truck industry, the years 1918 and 1919 will probably show a great increase in that figure. Humanity has to pay for its luxuries.

THE COLLECTION of stained glass formed by the late J. Pierpont Morgan and now presented by his son to the British people, is said to show once more how far in advance of our time the Middle Ages were in artistic conception and execution. In this particular form of art the modern world has nothing to show equal to the gems of the Morgan collection. One series in particular, four panels taken from Troyes Cathedral, representing the Temptation in the Wilderness, the Temptation on the Pinnacle, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and a scene from the life of St. Nicholas are referred to as the despair of modern artists. In the fact that the artists and craftsmen of the Middle Ages were inspired by Faith, and wrought for the glory of God rather than for filthy lucre probably lies the secret of their achievements.

FROM THE Chair of Peter, the centre from which all true progress may be said to radiate (however little humanity of today may be in the disposition to acknowledge it) comes once more the message which a war-torn world needs. "The necessity for faith is demonstrated by the insanity of the efforts of those who vainly try to give mankind peace and welfare, forgetting or ignoring God. Peace cannot be obtained by the individual and by mankind if there is not order in both, and there can be no order without an acknowledgment of the dominion of God over His creatures."

"TODAY," continued the Holy Father in his Christmas allocution, "the spirit of independence has invaded all minds, and leads them to rebellion. Today there is no shame in seeking amusements amidst the griefs and sorrows of others, and there is no limit to the dissipation of wealth and the drying up of the sources thereof. All this shows that modern society has attempted to set itself above God, passing from liberty to tolerance, from tolerance to division, from division to conflict, to ostracism of God. Therefore, forgetfulness of the supernatural and triumphs of the natural has led individuals to egotism and society to revolution and anarchy."

THE TIMELINESS of these words which may be said to set forth the very foundation of religion, is accentuated by the growing disposition outside the Catholic Church to dispense with creed altogether. For example, a writer in the Mail and Empire who, while controverting utterances that make for the total annihilation of

faith, and who at the same time goes out of his way to denounce the "dogmatism of the Pope," but exhibits his own hopeless state of drift in the process. As he very truly says: "You can offer no worship, no prayer, praise or thanksgiving that can be hoped to be acceptable to God unless it be the outcome of a true and lively faith." On what foundation, however, does "faith," according to this self-satisfied scribe lie? He has nothing better to offer than a "creed of some sort," which is but another way of saying that it has no foundation at all. That this correctly describes the non-Catholic idea of religion of this generation becomes day by day increasingly evident.

THE CASE OF FATHER O'DONNELL

TIMES CHARGES "POWERFUL CONSPIRACY" AGAINST IRISH PEACE

We refrained from commenting on the case of Father O'Donnell, C. F., while it was *sub lite*, and it is certainly difficult to comment upon it now with any restraint. On an accusation of being seditious language, this priest was taken into military custody in Ireland, moved to Dublin, treated there with indignity, inhumanity, and outrage, brought to London, and lodged in the Tower. Set at liberty on parole, he was then court-martialed, and then, to the astonishment of the London public, all the accusations brought against him broke down miserably at the first touch, and notwithstanding the attempt of counsel for the Crown to repair the case by cross-examination into Father O'Donnell's private opinions, he had to be forthwith acquitted. We have had no communication with Father O'Donnell since he sent us the account of the terrible railway accident in which, during their return from Lourdes, he and the soldiers with him played so heroic a part. We write only from the published reports in the Times, and the facts there disclosed are surely enough.

To such a pass has the management of affairs in or connected with Ireland come. With whom lies the blame—with the military, or the Government, or some subordinate officials—we know not, but the facts remain. A priest of exceptional, patriotic enthusiasm, who was foremost in recruiting in Australia, in whose behalf even that virulent hater of the Church, W. M. Hughes, was constrained to telegraph from Australia demanding his release—is treated as we have described, upon evidence, if evidence it may be called, which is not such that one would hang a cat upon it, and which he himself contradicts in every particular. There is manifestly more in this than simply military discipline or etiquette. It is some small satisfaction to know that efforts will be made to find out what.

A GRAVE ALLEGATION

In its wider aspect this question is daily assuming a graver and graver complexion. It is a most urgent need, as Cardinal Bourne pointed out in his sermon on Peace Sunday, that a settlement should be effected, and with this goes the necessity that obstructions to settlement of whatever sort, be removed. It is a very grave matter, therefore, that a paper like the Times should state, as it does in its issue of Monday, that "there is strong *prima facie* evidence of the existence of a powerful conspiracy against the prospect of an Irish peace," and should express its fear "that the Irish Executive are being used, whether with the connivance of members of the Cabinet or not, in order to arouse in Ireland a state of feeling, if not a state of rebellion, in which settlement may become impossible." Of the subject-matter of these surmises it is not for us to judge. But the mere fact that they find prominent place in a paper like the Times is quite enough. All sincere patriots and patrioters, all Catholics, with any influence in politics, should insist upon their being probed to the bottom.—The Universe.

PREACHING AND IMMORTALITY

The dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Inge, confesses that the four last things, or to be more exact the two last, heaven and hell, have ceased to be interesting to Anglican audiences. If this be interpreted as unconcern about immortality, and is widespread we cannot understand the hold that spiritualism with its grosser concept of immortality, is taking in England. It is hard to reconcile the imputation that belief in eternal life has lost its hold, among the adherents of the Church of England, and that the authorities of the same church are so grievously perturbed at the spread of the doctrines of Sir A. Conan Doyle. Or do they both come to the same thing, namely that Christianity has broken down, and in the Twentieth Century the Church of England must begin at the bottom. Of course, in America there is nothing new in this. The vague concept of God, the vaguer idea of an immortality have given way to an indifference to the one and the other. No religion can endure that sets aside dogmatic truth. Just as soon as there is a cessation in preaching the unchangeable faith of Christ there is a relaxation and a rejection of belief. The