

elies by "Box." It must be remembered too, that in "Barnaby Rudge" Dickens has given to the world for all time what someone has called a "classic memorial of Catholic sufferings," during the incendiary Gordon Riots. In that book the author makes clear that he has no sympathy with the hounding of Catholics or of others on the ground of religious belief. His tribute to St. Elphege, the martyr, and to St. Charles Borromeo, the social reformer, should also be remembered to his credit.

AND beyond all this, however, is the service Dickens rendered to the Little Sisters of the Poor. Upon the invitation of Cardinal Wiseman the Sisters had settled in his diocese and were devoting themselves as they have everywhere, and through their entire career, to the relief of the poor and suffering. This was in 1851, the very year of the fierce anti Catholic excitement we have been describing. Their early experiences in London, therefore, were not happy. They were jeered at in the streets, and at the height of the turmoil were obliged to disguise themselves when going abroad. It was some six months later that Dickens, during a sojourn in Paris, visited the Little Sisters in the Rue St. Jacques and on his return to London he wrote and published in Household Words, a glowing tribute to them and to their work. The whole article, as illustrative of his receptivity to good impressions of this character, and of his genuine sympathy with the poor and with those who ministered to them, would repay re-publication, but space forbids. Suffice it to say, that the tribute in Household Words, coming at such a time, was of great service to the Little Sisters. For Dickens was then at the height of his fame, and what ever he wrote was widely copied and quoted. When we feel incensed, therefore, at the crude expression in his novels, reflecting upon our mother, the Church, or upon her ministers it will be worth while to recall this incident of the Little Sisters, showing as it does, we think, that Dickens' errors were of the head and not of the heart.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

IN ASIA

The advance of the British in Mesopotamia and of the Russians in Persia is the welcome war news the importance of which it would be difficult to exaggerate.

Russians are closing in on the Ottoman forces in Asiatic Turkey. A Russian force is now moving westward on Bagdad from Sakiz, which is within twenty-five miles of the Mesopotamian border. Advancing southward from Turkish Armenia, another Russian force attacked the Turks twenty-six miles northwest of Erzingan and captured the enemy's fortified positions. Blowing these up, together with Turkish ammunition supplies, the Russian raiding party returned in safety with some prisoners. Erzingan was captured by the Russians in July last. It was a place of some military importance to the Turks, with large barracks and army stores. It is connected by road with Trebizond, the Russian base on the Black Sea. The Mesopotamian advance has been assisted materially by the breach between the native Arab tribes and the Turks. The quick advance on Bagdad by General Maude's forces and the demoralized retreat of the defenders of Kut-el-Amara are attributed in private advices to New York to the wholesale desertions of the Arab auxiliaries. The Turks are now menaced not only by the British and Russian advances, but also by strong forces of Arab cavalry, who are harassing the flanks of the retreating Turks. These Arab forces have been organized by the British as their allies, a fact of tremendous significance in its bearing on the future of Asiatic Turkey. Various tribes, under the leadership of the Grand Sheriff of Mecca, have united their forces against Ottoman rule. Mecca is now in their possession.

THE SUBMARINE

The British food situation is really serious, according to Sir Edward Carson, who forecasted still more drastic restrictions on imports. "Stick it out" is the motto set before the country by the First Lord of the Admiralty. "The people's food is really threatened," was the opening note of his speech at the Aldwych Club, London.

GERMANY'S FOOD PROBLEM

The food crisis in Germany is more serious than Berlin is willing to admit. In the Prussian Diet a Socialist member, Herr Hofer, stated that "the mortality among elderly people is increasing at a terrible rate." He also declared that epidemics are spreading, owing to the lowered vitality of the underfed people, that suicides are increasing, and that parents are killing their children rather than see them suffer

the pangs of unsatisfied hunger. These conditions are due largely to the unfair distribution of food, and to a great extent must be attributed also to the necessity imposed upon the military authorities of keeping the armies supplied. At all hazards German rulers will avoid famine conditions in the trenches. Few soldiers will fight on empty stomachs.—Globe, March 10.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

THE IRISH QUESTION

OPINION OF HOUSE AND PRESS EVEN IN UNIONIST CIRCLES FAVORS IMMEDIATE SOLUTION

Special Cable to the CATHOLIC RECORD (Copyright 1917, Central News)

London, March 10.—The greater part of public attention has centered during the past few days on the Irish question. Never since the early days of the War has an internal political question so greatly puzzled the thinking men of the United Kingdom.

The uncertainty of the decision of the Government in regard to the Irish has kept the greater part of the English press dumb and this uncertainty has been prolonged by the illness of Premier Lloyd George, who, standing amid the cold blasts, alternating from sea and mountain, beside the grave of his old uncle, caught a bad chill and was confined to his bed for a couple of days.

Further uncertainty was caused by the visit of the premier to France in preparation of the great new offensive on the Western front in the Spring and other overwhelming cares of government, which prevented Lloyd George from the serious tackling of the question.

Up to the last moment, the realization of the gravity of the situation and the uncertainty of its issue has compelled that almost unbroken reticence upon the part of the newspapers, which was so remarkable a fact in this phase of the Irish struggle for freedom.

However, a few days before the advent of the parliament debate on the question, Liberal papers began to break their prolonged silence and with one accord pressed the Government for an immediate settlement of the problem.

The opinion of the House of Commons also steadily grew in favor of a settlement once and for all on this great question and even Unionist circles and Chief Secretary Duke was known to be strongly of the same opinion.

At a meeting of Mr. Asquith and his colleagues, the same view was expressed, Asquith holding strongly that without an immediate solution things were bound to go from bad to worse, in Ireland's affairs as placed in relation to the welfare of the United Kingdom.

Irish members of the House of Commons, returning from Ireland, brought back the same tale of country seething with discontent and for the moment chiefly concerned in hitting back at the Government in return for the horrors attending the executions of several of the leaders of the masses.

The situation has been further complicated by the prolonged illness of Leader Redmond, who has suffered a serious relapse from an attack of influenza and only managed to return to London from Brighton, with great difficulty. He insisted upon being present at the debate on the Irish question in spite of the remonstrances of his friends.

In the meantime there has sprung up a suggestion which emanated from a member of the ministry some months ago which intimates that the question is impossible of solution in Parliament owing to the insuperable division of opinion between the Irish parties and the aggravated temper displayed upon both sides.

In Ireland itself, it is proposed to overcome this difficulty by lifting it out of Parliament and transferring the decision to a strong body of men, consisting of the great figures in the British Empire, including some of the Colonial Prime Ministers and men like Lord Shaftesbury.

To put the Home Rule act into immediate operation, after making such modifications, apart from the Ulster difficulty, as required to meet the present conditions, is now necessary because of the entire change in the financial situation, which has been created by the great sums spent by Ireland since the outbreak of the War which has transformed her deficit of peace time into several millions, contributed to the Imperial taxation above the cost of the services of the Imperial Government in Ireland.

This idea has caught on with extraordinary rapidity and after days of secret consideration by various groups, has begun to be circulated by the newspapers.

The Irish party, however, has remained entirely outside of these conversations and has refused to take any responsibility for such a course, or, indeed, for any policy, except that of immediately putting into operation the Home Rule act.

It is reported that the Carson group had adopted a similar policy and that some of their party gave a strong negative to the question, so that finally it proved an obstacle to the settlement of the problem at this moment.

Every party has become so discredited by the abject failure of the late ministry and especially of Asquith and Lloyd George to carry through the settlement last July, that

this failure was regarded justly by Ireland as another example of the refusal, so often repeated in the history of England, to fulfil her pledges.

This has added to the feeling of exasperation which is felt all through Ireland, and the executions which have recently occurred have added fuel to the smouldering flames of discontent; and the Irish party, though it has carried out its pledges at great personal political risk, against overwhelming odds, has shared in the general loss of prestige that comes from failure, even though that failure has been created by others.

In fact, the whole policy of partition has become more and more discredited and thus has made it impossible for any Irish Nationalist to accept the terms which were made last July. Indeed, those terms were killed and buried by Asquith's and Lloyd George's failure to carry them through to completion last year.

This is an attempt to explain the extraordinary tangle into which the vicissitudes of the British parties, and the weaknesses of the successive British ministries, as well as unrest in Ireland, have brought the Irish problem.

These entanglements have rendered difficult, if not impossible, the settlement of the problem at this moment, but still I do not abandon the hope of reconciling Ireland and strengthening the position of this country in the peace conference which will come after the close of the great War, in which, with the assistance of the President of the United States, the map of Europe will be so changed as to recognize the rights of the weaker nations.

And in the meantime, two other great problems which are gradually solving themselves are being watched with the closest interest by all the United Kingdom.

Of these two, the one in which Great Britain, and through her the others of the British Isles, is more closely concerned in the immediate present, is the gradually weakening of the German U-boat peril. Despite all of the assurances of the Admiralty that Germany would not succeed in her threat to "starve" England, the masses were fearful.

This feeling, however, is being daily dissipated through the reports of the sinking and capturing of the enemy's submarines by England's navy and by the great number of vessels, carrying both supplies and passengers, which daily enter and depart from British and Irish harbors.

Then too, the feeling of confidence that the threat of a blockade was mostly "bluff" has been increased by the remarkably small average of vessels destroyed by the heralded great fleet of German U-boats, all of which leads one to believe that the number of submarines possessed by Germany was far less than thought at first.

The second great question here is when will the actual opening of hostilities between the United States and Germany occur. Everywhere one hears this question brought up as a topic of the liveliest interest.

The failure of the United States Senate to pass the "armed ship bill" is viewed by thinking people in Great Britain as an almost unbelievable thing. Astonished and dumbfounded we can only wait, trusting in the ability of the President of the United States to steer his country clear of the obstructions thrown in its way by a few men.

THE SPIRIT OF SERVILITY

The Catholic Register

THE CATHOLIC RECORD, of London, Ont., has an editorial contributor whose articles are signed The Gleaner. They are the work of a keen and shrewd observer of life among our Catholic people, one who has evidently given much thought to their needs, and who is zealous for their best progress.

He has lately been discussing some of the obstacles to that progress; and in an article in last week's issue (March 8) he deals with two that are very deep-seated and very deplorable. Those which he discusses in the article just referred to are the spirit of servility and the tendency to individualism—the latter as manifested in "parochialism," or that spirit which is the reverse of Catholic, and again in the failure of parents to encourage, and of sons to undertake, the duties of marriage and the establishment of a home.

All that he says on these subjects is timely and vitally important. For the present we wish to refer to the first of the obstacles dealt with—the spirit of servility—of which the writer says:

"It is a spirit that has been bred in the bone through long centuries of persecution in which our forebears were deprived of their civil and religious rights. We are only beginning to adjust ourselves to the more favorable conditions in which we live. In many communities Catholics are manifesting a more manly spirit of independence and a sense of civic responsibility; but evidences of the cringing attitude are yet, alas, only too numerous. How often it happens that when a family meets with prosperity and gets, as the saying is, 'a little up in the world' they ambition to get into Protestant society? We might excuse them for striving to gain admission to a social set that could lay some claim to blue blood and culture; but not unfrequently the new circle that they have entered is in point of intelligence and refinement not to speak of morals, much inferior to their former associates.

"If a Catholic offers himself for some public office, his laudable ambition is apt to be frustrated by the votes of his co-religionists who resent the audacity of his thinking himself fitted for the position, for which he is perhaps better qualified than any who are opposing him. Apart from the spirit of jealousy, there is manifested here a lack of the spirit of public responsibility."

We suppose there is not a village, town, or city in Canada having a mixed Catholic and Protestant population, in which the social tendency of Catholics referred to in the first of these paragraphs is not manifested. It is a great evil. It is not only that it is a source of serious discreditation to those Catholics who rightly regard their religion as the greatest of all possible honours, but that in those addicted to it it utterly kills, or at least reduces to a state of feebleness scarcely distinguishable from death, all zeal for the faith, all interest in Catholic progress or Catholic activities of any nature. If the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. X. are set upon being recognized by Mrs. A., who is away up in society, and whom they regard as their superior just because she is not a Catholic, what room is left in those hearts for any real devotion to Catholic activity? They may possibly preserve some semblance of interest in it for appearance sake; but the Catholic charitable or missionary meeting, for example, that happens to coincide with Mrs. A.'s party will certainly not see them, even, in all probability, if the season be Lent. Nor could they interest them in a Catholic Truth Society; their minds are on something else.

Is anyone surprised to find jealousy treated as a manifestation of this spirit of servility? A little reflection will remove his surprise. Jealousy is one of the most common vices of the servile; and it may remain long after the spirit that has given it birth has itself been driven out. Catholics suffer severely from its outcroppings. Who has not observed the frequent difficulty of harmoniously conducting a Catholic society? The antagonism of some two men or some two women will upset things. Persons each really desirous of doing good will refuse to work together. One will oppose any project that the other suggests. From the lowest to the highest we find this wretched spirit in operation. Even a little business enterprise will furnish endless instances of its action.

"We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." Do we ever pause to ask ourselves how we stand this test? See how those Christians love one another! Do we furnish like edification to those whose eyes are so keenly directed upon us? Our examinations of conscience ought surely not to neglect this important matter.

NOT NEW

The papers of the central west have lately carried flaring headlines announcing that the Catholic Church was to take a stand on divorce and birth control. If an outsider knew nothing of the doctrine and morality taught by the Church in such offenses against the moral law is quite unintelligible. Possibly, upon the sup-

posed and that former legislation was to be modified, if not entirely abrogated. Going no further than the headlines, the reader would be tempted to suppose that divorce and the other iniquity had previously been tolerated in our circles.

By way of diversion, we once heard a sincere member of another community argue that many of our practices were modern perversions because there was no mention of them in the early history of the Church. When the mother of St. Augustine was passing to her heavenly reward, though her son details in his "confessions" the circumstances of her demise, he does not allude to any administration of the sacrament of extreme unction. Hence the objector concluded that sacrament was unknown to the gifted child of Monica and its adoption by the Church was an indefensible corruption of the teachings of Jesus.

Logicians tell us that from a negative argument one may not draw an affirmative conclusion, which only means that because it was not mentioned by Augustine it does not follow that some sacrament now known to us was entirely unknown to him. The reception of extreme unction was the natural preparation of the soul for an eternal journey, and, not foreseeing that the spiritual world would later be split into conflicting camps, the great doctor took it for granted that everyone would know without being told that the mother of the writer was fortified with such grace. A common illustration that may be more convincing to present readers is supplied by any of our daily papers. In the religious announcement, printed usually on Saturday, our Protestant neighbors of certain denominations make announcement that communion will be administered on the following day at a stated hour. We are not conceding that communion, as we define the word, is really administered, but using the published announcement as it reads and taking into consideration the absolute silence of the Catholic Church in the same connection, we are creating a situation which our foes attempt to turn to their purpose when the practices of the early members of the fold are under discussion. None ever reads in any daily journal that the Catholics are to receive Communion at stated times. A thousand years hence some remote descendant of this generation may come across a preserved issue of one of our contemporary publications and immediately he will be driven to conclude, following the course of reasoning accepted by our critics, that in this age the Catholic Church did not believe in the Real Presence, because no item is found bearing upon the reception of Communion. In other words, our general practice forbids special announcement. We do not parade our religious acts because everyone should know, who pretends to any enlightenment in matters of faith, that such things are common with us.

We return, then, to the lately heralded policy of the Church against divorce and birth restriction. Why any managing editor should have allowed his reporter and his headliner to set in large type, as if a new sensation, the undeviating conduct of our Church in such offenses against the moral law is quite unintelligible. Possibly, upon the sup-

position, that the world has run mad over such subjects the papers may have regarded as worthy of special emphasis the time-hallowed stand of the Church for purity of family relation. But Catholics are well aware that no innovation has been introduced, for the Church has set her face as flint against the filthy demands of corrupted humanity, demands which are now smiled upon by many who claim the name of Christian.—F. in The Guardian.

CARDINAL MERCIER

MANIFESTS HIS INTEREST IN THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS (C. P. A. Service)

Brussels, March 1.—Cardinal Mercier has written an interesting preface to an English edition of his "Manual of Philosophy," which is to appear in a few days. After thanking the translator for his labors, he says that the formation of a philosophical course has been one of the chief objectives of his professional career, and present events have only increased its importance in his eyes. "The Anglo-Saxon countries have submitted to the influence of empiricism and numerous are the spirits which cover, in the name of agnosticism, the disdain for the realities of metaphysical order. Others, disciples of Kant, seek in a nebulous idealism, tinged with subjectivism and monism, a limit to the aspirations which raise them above the region of pure sensible experience. The events of the last two years have shaken souls, and caused the need of the ideal to become more imperious."

MISSIONARY PRIEST IN AFRICA LOSES HIS LIFE BY DROWNING

From Brazzaville, French Congo, comes news of another sad drowning accident by which a missionary priest lost his life.

One morning some natives came to ask Father Herjean, Superior of the Liranga mission, to visit a man dying of the sleeping sickness. As he had some distance to go, the Father made ready his little motor boat and all embarked. The journey was made in safety until near the landing place, where the boat struck a half buried tree trunk and leaned heavily to one side. In a panic of fear the natives leaped to the opposite side, completely capsizing the craft.

Everyone tried to save himself. Father Herjean, a good swimmer, gained the shore. He then saw that one of the natives was still struggling in the current, and leaping back into the water sought to save

the poor man. But the latter, clutching his rescuer in a frenzied grip impeded his movements already made difficult by the clinging soutane. Both disappeared in the current not to rise again.

The natives rushed to the spot and endeavored to find some trace of the pair, but it was not until four days later that the bodies were found caught in the roots of a tree.

The loss of this good priest and incidentally of the boat is a severe blow to the station. Father Herjean was an indefatigable worker, and in his little motor boat carried help along the Congo and up its numerous tributaries. The region is infested with the tse-tse fly and the wretched victims of the sleeping sickness depend on the ministrations of the priests.—True Voice.

FATHER FRASER'S CHINESE MISSION

Taichow, China, Nov. 26, 1916

Dear Readers of CATHOLIC RECORD: That your charity towards my mission is approved by the highest ecclesiastical authorities of Canada let me quote from a letter from His Excellency, The Most Rev. Peregrine F. Stagli, O. S. M., D. Apostolic Delegate, Ottawa: "I have been watching with much interest the contributions to the Fund opened on behalf of your missions by the CATHOLIC RECORD. The success has been very gratifying and shows the deep interest which our Catholic people take in the work of the missionary in foreign lands. . . I bless you most cordially and all your labors, as a pledge my earnest wishes for your greatest success in all your undertakings." I entreat you to continue the support of my struggling mission, assuring you a remembrance in my prayers and Masses.

Yours faithfully in Jesus and Mary, J. M. FRASER.

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A friend, Highland Park.	3 00
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THERE'S DANGER IN SIGHT—BUT YOU CAN HELP

DO YOU KNOW—

that the rapidly rising price of food stuffs means that the World's reserve supply is getting small?

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that a world-wide famine can only be averted by increasing this supply?

DO YOU KNOW—

that a "food famine" would be a worse disaster to the Empire and her Allies than reverses in the Field?

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help thwart Germany's desperate submarine thrust on the high seas.

YOU CAN—

do this by helping to make every bit of land in Canada produce—the very last pound of food stuffs of which it is capable.

AND REMEMBER—

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India & Argentina to Britain	6000 MILES
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