

EIGHT

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THE ADMIRAL AND THE LITTLE CHILD

The great Admiral Alphonso Albuquerque, conqueror of the East Indies, was a man of singular faith and piety.

On one occasion, in the midst of a terrible hurricane, his fleet was in imminent danger of being destroyed.

All seemed lost, but the Admiral, whose thoughts were now fixed on that eternity into which he saw that all of them must soon enter,

was suddenly roused as if by an inspiration from Heaven. Taking into his arms a little child who stood near him on the deck, he raised him up towards Heaven, and, in a voice louder than even the roaring of the tempest,

thus prayed to God: "O great God of Heaven, if our sins have caused Thee to rise up in anger against us, for we are all, indeed sinners and guilty before Thee, let the sight of this innocent child move Thee to mercy; look upon him, yet beautiful in his baptismal innocence, and for his sake be pleased to turn away Thy anger from us and show us mercy."

"At that same moment," relates the historian, "the tempest abated, and a great calm fell upon the ocean, so that the great consolation of those mariners who had expected only a watery grave."

Alongside of this modern story put that narrated by Saint Matthew two thousand years ago. It is as follows: And Jesus calling unto Him a little child set him in the midst of them.

And said: Amen I say to you, now you are converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

Whoever, therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven.

And he that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.

See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father who is in Heaven.

Can it be that the little children are going to write large their names in the annals of Heaven? If so what of the future?

Peace?—The Tablet.

PROTESTANT MINISTER AND MARTIN LUTHER

To Editor of Herald and Journal: Several years ago when there was a lot of spurge over the "great soul" of John Calvin, William Morris pricked the bubble and pointed out the defects in the character of Calvin which warranted his conclusion that "John Calvin was quite the worst man in history."

We will soon be hearing the panegyrics on Luther and I want to offer some suggestions which if looked into will show to anyone that Luther is a sadly over-estimated figure in history.

Careful study of the period shows that the political and economic upheavals, the transfer from feudal aristocracy to monarchy, the transfer from agriculture to commerce, the loss of the common lands to the peasant leading those led to the great movement for progress rather than Luther's '95 Theses.

There was a great political, economic and intellectual change, as well as a religious change. One who will read "The Social Side of the Reformation" by Belfort Bax, will see how sadly over-rated the work of Luther is, for even his religious advance was largely paid for by others.

In his attitude toward the peasants Luther shows himself either a traitor or a brutal monster who used them as dupes to his own end and then deserted them. One cannot plead ignorance for him, for his earlier pamphlets show that he appreciated the injustices done the peasants.

Luther's pamphlet, issued in 1525, "Against the Thieving and Murderous Bands of Peasants," and his harangues against the Jews, quite put him outside the lines of those men whom we must look upon as truly great. His words against the poor peasants struggling to redress their wrongs and waging one of the most unequal and brave battles against injustice of them this Luther says, "In the case of an insurgent peasant every man is both judge and executioner. Whoever can, should knock down, strangle, stab, stamp upon, either secretly or publicly, all such. Nothing is so venomous, pernicious and devilish as an insurgent peasant. So wonderful are these times that a prince merits heaven by bloodshed better than a peasant by

prayer." Toward the Jews Luther preached, "Burn their synagogues and schools; what will not burn bury with earth that neither stone nor rubbish remain. Break into their houses, forbid their rabbis to teach on pain of life and limb. Take away their prayer books and Talmuds, in which is nothing but cursing, lies, godlessness.

Such was the man that conventional history honors as a great hero, and that conventional Protestant churches will soon honor as a saint.

Nothing is ever gained by that which is not true; all honor to Wycliff, John Ball, John Huss, Thomas Munzer, Hans Bohm, the real religious reformers; all honor to Thomas More and Erasmus, the scholars; St. Francis, the saint; but let us get over the traditional panegyrics for a man who does not deserve a small part the praises he is received.

ROLAND D. SAWYER. Ware, Oct. 16.

TEACH THEM WHAT TO READ

There is a diverting story told about a cub reporter on a New York newspaper who enjoyed so keenly a novel of Thackeray, he had been given to read that on the advice of a mischievous friend he journeyed to Yonkers to secure an interview with that well known author.

For he was quite unaware that Thackeray had died in England fifty-four years ago. However weak that young reporter's grasp may have been on the details of the great Victorian novelist's career, nevertheless he was capable of enthusiastically enjoying a good book when he chanced upon one.

Can as much be said of the average lad or lass who is graduated now days from our Catholic high schools, or academies, or colleges? Close observers sadly shake their heads.

Most of these boys and girls can tell you, perhaps, when Thackeray "flourished," for they were forced to "get up" some biographical data concerning him in order to pass an examination, but as for reading his chief works, and particularly with enjoyment,—that they have never done and in all probability never will do.

Cannot the grave indictment which the late Canon Sheehan drew up against the secondary schools of Ireland be justly applied to many of our American institutions of learning? For the Canon writes:

"The beauties of English literature, the vast treasures that have been accumulated for centuries by the rich and prolific authorship of great and enlightened men, the hoard of precious thoughts that lie hidden there beneath the covers of books which modern competition has made available for the slenderest purse—all are unknown and concealed from eager and inquiring spirits, who then go out into the world to feed their minds on the only pabulum of which they have ever heard—the gavage of London (New York) fimsies, or the London of party political organs, where there is neither 'truth, justice or judgment.' A taste for reading—I mean reading anything wholesome or elevating—is almost unknown in this country. A young Englishman, or a young Scotchman, will be found to have a pretty fair idea of the English classics—a pretty fair idea of what books are worth reading and what books are worthless. And, considering the fact that really live in the joy and pleasure of it is not pitiable that our children's minds should be so starved that, in after life they cannot distinguish food from poison—the great thoughts that elevate and refine from the pitiable trivialities that weaken the intellect, lower the standards of ethical and moral worth, and create an effeminate and thoughtless people, swayed by passion, and regardless, because ignorant, of the higher principles of reason and public morality?"

Catholics employed in our public libraries complain that it is hardly worth while buying Catholic books, they are read by so few, and those few, in many instances, are non-Catholics. As for the great authors of past times, that Canon Sheehan refers to, they seem to be rarely taken out by Catholics, and it is much to be feared that the graduates of our Catholic schools, if they read anything at all, find in the latest worthless or dangerous best-seller all the mental pabulum they desire.

How richly deserving therefore of praise and commendation are those Catholic teachers who succeed in filling their pupils with a love for good books. If our boys and girls were taught during their high school days what authors to like and why they should like them their education would be half accomplished. If in the beginning their taste in literature is carefully trained, in after years it will continue to be formed and developed by the books they delight in reading. Catholic teachers

who can inspire with an enthusiastic love of good reading the boys and girls entrusted to their care have probably won for them a blessing which next to that of the Catholic Faith will prove to the end of life their greatest comfort and safeguard.—America.

DOCTOR BOISSARIE OF LOURDES

The story of Lourdes will always appeal to the Catholic heart—the story of little Bernadette, who clung so tenaciously to the truth of her vision, though she was so sternly questioned, and even harshly reprimanded, by her pastor, for seeing things that others did not see. He was harsh because of his love of his religion and his great desire that no reproach be brought upon it by foolish dreams and words of any of his parishioners.

But the day came when the trembling Bernadette convinced even her good pastor that to her had been given a great mission by our Lady herself. And in due time all the Catholic world turned to Lourdes.

The persistent war of rationalism against belief in the supernatural marked the nineteenth century. "The question of miracles was in the forefront of this conflict between rationalism and Catholicism," says a writer in The Month, "the former brushing away confidently every story of alleged miracle as the fruit of a credulous age long since passed away."

But the story of Lourdes and the miracles was of our own day, and was becoming more and more of public interest as the century drew to a close. Even men of recognized scientific reputation were obliged to pay attention to what was happening in Lourdes, and, in a number of cases, they were forced to admit that the cures could not be accounted for by suggestion "or indeed by any natural process that they knew of or could conceive of."

Dr. George Boissarie, a man of ardent faith, who died on June 28, this year, was among those who took an active part in directing the attention of the scientific world on Lourdes, and his name is a household word in many lands.

Therefore, a deep interest attaches to the account of his life, published in The Annals of Our Lady of Lourdes, from which The Month gleaned the following facts:

Born in Sarlat, in 1837, George Boissarie was the son of a doctor and was educated for the same profession. He studied in Paris, made a distinguished record, and received much favorable notice for his work as corresponding member of a number of medical societies. It was predicted that he would have a brilliant career in Paris, but inclination drew him back to his early home, where he took over his father's practice, married and became the father of five sons, all of whom attained distinction in different lines of endeavor.

Dr. Boissarie was first attracted to Lourdes in the early eighties, and became a frequent visitor at the Bureau de Constatations. There he found a precious opportunity to apply to the cures the best tests that human science could offer. When the President of the Bureau died Dr. Boissarie was chosen to fill the post, and there he remained until failing health and advancing years obliged him to retire.

Firm in faith, he was also positive in the conviction that true miracles should be able to bear the most rigorous application of scientific tests and should even invite the application of such tests.

He put at the disposal of his fellow-scientists all the facilities of the Bureau to aid their investigations. As his fame went abroad medical men from many lands went to Lourdes, which they thought, would in any case afford them the finest clinical subjects. The Annals state that as many as 7,778 such visitors took part in the investigations during the twenty-three years Dr. Boissarie was in office.

Among the first to visit Lourdes shortly after the doctor entered on the work was Zola, who went confident that he would detect a fraud and would expose it to the world in his next novel. Every opportunity to investigate was given him, and he showed his appreciation of this honorable treatment by grossly misrepresenting and altering facts in his book "Lourdes" so as to make cures seem to have been fleeting and unreal, and giving readers the impression that such was the condition of affairs he found in Lourdes.

Dr. Boissarie, two years later, brought to Paris three of the persons whose cures had been misrepresented by Zola. At a public meeting in the Luxembourg, the doctor gave the audience an ocular demonstration of the glaring difference between the truth and Zola's fabrication.

Good came out of evil, as the incident led to annual meetings in Paris, at which subjects of the most interesting cures were presented. Carefully documented studies of their cases were read by distinguished physicians.

Dr. Boissarie made his last public appearance in 1914, when the Eucharistic Congress was being held in Lourdes. The doctor had the happiness of listening to the remarkable report on the medical proof of miracles that was read before the Congress by Doctor Bec, head surgeon of St. Joseph's Hospital, Paris. It was as the seal set on his life-work.—Sacred Heart Review.

CHARACTER It is no doubt the professor's function to develop the mathematician, the chemist; but the man, that is the moral life in man, is perhaps formed before ten years of age; and if this life has not acquired its form at his mother's knee, it will be a great misfortune. If, however, the mother, as is her duty, has stamped on the forehead of her child a divine character, it is almost certain that the touch of vice can never wholly efface it. The youth may, without doubt, step aside from the straight path; but he will describe, so to speak, a curve which will eventually bring him back to the starting point. Joseph De Maistre.

THE TABLET FUND

Toronto, Dec. 8, 1917. Editor CATHOLIC RECORD: I thank you for giving space to the Appeal for the Tablet Fund for the Relief of the Belgians. So far I have received because of this appeal:

Previously acknowledged... 1449 99 Teacher and Pupils at Walenstein... 11 50 Mrs. M. J. Hogan, Clayton... 7 00

If you would be good enough to acknowledge publicly these amounts in the columns of the RECORD I would be very grateful.

Respectfully yours, W. E. BLAKE, 93 Pembroke St., Toronto.

DIED

McCLEAR.—At Northfield Station, on Saturday, December 1, Dennis McClear, aged thirty-four years, nine months, four days. May his soul rest in peace.

WEISENBORN.—On Friday morning, Dec. 7, 1917, at her home, 130 Peck street, Rochester, N. Y., Mrs. Mary A. Weisenborn, wife of J. George Weisenborn. May her soul rest in peace.

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