

—this is Sister Clare. She has told these faithful fully with the black children for eight years. She has so little to live on—almost nothing—not even the necessities of life. Just before I left the island, she told me she had only one loaf, and that was almost in rags, and that she hadn't had a new veil in five years.

The mission friar stared at the radiant overplaid Katie's face. How could he know that those chance phrases uttered at random were showing Katie how to bridge her precips? She poised for flight like a scared rabbit, but her laugh bubbled out as she reflected that a worn-out hat made an easy crown of thorns. At home Pat would be waiting, either cross from hunger and her absence, or maudlin from Finnegan's, but Katie didn't care. She smiled again and placed in the friar's hand the bills that had been scorching her work-hardened palm.

"Take them Father, take them please," she urged, "take them as a penitential offering from a near-Judas—that's me. Half of it keep for yourself, won't you now, and I'd like—I'd like so much to send on the other half to that nice Sister Clare. Tell her to use it for a new coat and a new veil—don't refuse me now, not for the love of Heaven—and if you can be saying a word when you send it on, just say that it's a gift from a penitent soul—that is, Katie Mulcahey's Easter bonnet that she's wishin' Sister Clare would wear out for her! Tell her it's come by way of a cross."

MAGAZINES GROW BOLDER

The March number of the Extension Magazine criticises an article contributed by Marie Coralli to Good Housekeeping, and an illustration used by the latter magazine in connection with the article. The article is written, we read, "in the language of a literary common scold, to abuse revealed religion in connection with the great war in Europe. The article is based on a picture—offensive to Catholics as the article is offensive to all Christians. The drawing shows a king disappearing from a group consisting of a Bishop, two German officers, and a silk-hatted statesman or capitalist with a cigar in his mouth. The hands of a multitude of people are vainly lifted to them. Behind this group is the figure of Christ who consoles the people turning to Him. All that Miss Coralli has to offer is a religion without dogma. The drawing symbolizes a Christ who established no dogma. And there is no Christ to correspond to the picture.

Extension Magazine might have found further cause for complaint if it had taken a few other expressions of anti-Catholic sentiment into consideration, as we find them in some other popular publications. A decidedly anti-Catholic wave has arisen in connection with the world war, and we cannot afford to close our eyes to the dangers which may arise from the surreptitious campaign carried on in the field of literature against the Church. In the Illustrated Sunday Magazine, a Syndicate enterprise and, therefore, a publication which enjoys an extensive circulation, we find some very pertinent passages from the pen of E. Phillips Oppenheim, who has contributed a story entitled "The Sad-faced Hermit." The hero visits the ruins of St. Clement's Abbey (presumably the remnants of an old Benedictine Abbey in England) and remarks to the present owner, Cyril Vaux: "A magnificent ruin. . . . But you don't seem to admire it much, Cyril; after one look downward he had turned away with something very much like a shudder. "Am I likely," Cyril answered, "to admire anything which reminds me of those cursed monks?"—and then Cyril tells a part of the family history, which is supposed to place the monks in an ugly light. He relates a story of how his great uncle, the "largest land-owner and probably the richest man in the country," had been a frequent visitor at the monastery. The elder Vaux, being a Roman Catholic, fell an easy victim to the Abbot's secretarial, Ricardo, "a Jesuit (if of the worst type, cunning, cunning, ambitious, who found the land-owner 'an easy tool,' Vaux's gifts to the Abbey, already very large, were 'doubled and trebled,' and 'always found their way to Rome.' Ricardo induced Vaux to accompany him to Rome, and there to make 'bequests to the Church which necessitated his mortgaging every acre he possessed,' and 'got him to sign a will leaving everything to them' (the monks). Not content with casting these aspersions on the monks, Oppenheim has Cyril to allege that some trouble, presumably in connection with some scandal, arose between his uncle and Ricardo, whereupon the elder Vaux recalled his previous will and went to the Abbot to prefer 'some grave charges' against Ricardo. From that night on Vaux 'has never been seen nor heard of, and on that same night Ricardo also disappeared, and has never reappeared.' "Nine-tenths (of the estates) went to the Monastery," and the later will (of the uncle) was never found, and the monks claimed every acre which was not entailed. That is why I am such a poor man, and can't even live in my own house.

BLESSED OLIVER PLUNKETT

St. Patrick's day was celebrated at the Vatican by the reading by Pope Benedict of a decree for the beatification of Oliver Plunkett.

Mgr. O'Riordan, rector of the Irish college, delivered an address in which he said Ireland was to-day paying to Plunkett a debt owed to him for more than two centuries. After reviewing the life of Plunkett, Mgr. O'Riordan spoke of the religious struggle in the United Kingdom.

Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, was born at Loughgore, near Oldcastle, County Meath, Ireland, 1629. His is the brightest name in the Irish Church throughout the whole period of persecution. He was connected by birth with the families which had just then been ennobled, the Earls of Roscommon and Fingall, as well as with Lords Louth and Dunsany. Till his sixteenth year his education was attended to by Patrick Plunkett, Abbot of St. Mary's, Dublin, brother of the first Earl of Fingall, afterward Bishop, successively, of Ardagh and Meath. He witnessed the first triumphs of the Irish Confederates, and as an aspirant to the priesthood, set out for Rome in 1645, under the care of Father Scarampa, of the Roman Oratory. As a student of the Irish College of Rome, which some twenty years before had been founded by Cardinal Ludovisi, his record was particularly brilliant. The rector, in after years, attested that he "devoted himself with such ardor to philosophy, theology and mathematics that, in the Roman College of the Society of Jesus he was justly ranked amongst the foremost in talent, diligence and progress in his studies, and he pursued with abundant fruit the course of civil and canon law of the Roman Sapientia, and everywhere, at all times, was a model of gentleness, integrity and piety." Promoted to the priesthood in 1654, Dr. Plunkett was deputed by the Irish bishops to act as their representative in Rome. Throughout the period of the Cromwellian usurpation and the first years of Charles II.'s reign he most effectively pleaded the cause of our suffering Church, while at the same time he discharged the duties of theological professor at the College of Propaganda. In the Congregation of Propaganda, July 9, 1669, he was appointed to the primatial See of Armagh, and was consecrated Nov. 30, at Ghent, in Belgium, by the Bishop of Ghent, assisted by the Bishop of Ferns and another bishop.

too apparent. But the same motive is no less evident in another short story, which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, in which the author drags an Austrian Catholic priest into his narrative and makes of him a militant civilian, in spite of his sacerdotal garb. Even the priest-hood is distorted into an accessory of the verbal caricature. The story is entitled "The Honor of the Force," and in a paragraph on "The Charge on the House," the priest is pictured as deliberately walking up to the garrisoned house which is to be placed under fire and there conversing with the garrison in a free and unconcerned manner. He then walks over to the sergeant of the opposing forces. The latter endeavors to prevail upon him to urge the small garrison to surrender, inasmuch as he, as a "man of the cloth," should be glad to prevent the shedding of blood." The priest replies with a smile, while "the glint in his narrowed eyes was a glint of fire and ice." Then the priest passes away, only to "call up to the garrison words of encouragement." He "paced away," according to the author, "lean and black, teetering rhythmically in his long robe, as lean, black vultures rhythmically together through the gutters of a tropic town."

The Saturday Evening Post prides itself on its circulation. It were better if it took greater pride in the contents and purpose of the stories it publishes. Such story-writing can serve but one purpose, that of influencing readers against the Church and its servants. But the magazines mentioned are not the only agents of an anti-Catholic propaganda. The Baltimore American of March 1st calls attention also to the activities of a "Secret Order" before the legislature at Annapolis. "The House Judiciary Committee," we read, "gave a hearing of Mr. Humphrey's bill to withdraw State financial aid from all educational, charitable and other institutions not chartered by the State. The bill hits the Catholic institutions the hardest, as they are the most numerous of the denominational institutions not owned by the State." And again: "George Waldron, National Organizer of the 'Great Secret Order,' was the principal speaker in defense of the bill."

Evidence like this is cumulative and, in the last analysis, the purpose of these expressions and happenings can not be misunderstood. Expressions and occurrences of this character have led the Baltimore Catholic Review to go so far even as to ask whether the creation of a specifically Catholic party is not desirable as a means to protect the Church and to counteract such influences as the foregoing evidence has shown to be active. While there may be some question as to the desirability of such a step, there is certainly a real need of Catholic wakenedness, and a realization of the coming danger and preparedness to meet it.—C. B. O. V.

A CONDUCTOR'S CONVERSION

(By Rev. Peter Geiermann, C. S. S. R.)

"Praying again? I would like to know what you get out of prayer?" The priest looked up from his breviary and saw the conductor smiling pleasantly at his side. There were few passengers on the Transcontinental, and the stations in that section of the country were few and far between. With little to do the conductor had repeatedly sought the priest's company, and had now returned for a pleasant chat.

"Every passenger in the immigrant car could answer that question," replied the priest as he closed his book and made room for the conductor.

"Their company doesn't appeal to me," said the conductor, still smiling. "You have given me new ideas and have been agreeable company, so I have begun to gravitate towards you whenever I have nothing to occupy my attention.

"Thank you for the compliment," remarked the priest. "You have already solved your own difficulty, he then added as he smiled with satisfaction. "We pray or associate with God, to receive new light and suggestions from Him, so receive His help, and to profit by His company. You see, the very act of raising our minds and hearts to Him checks the perverse tendency of our lower nature and develops our nobler faculties. And besides, God loves us with a father's love, and is not only anxious to help us but has solemnly promised to hear our prayers."

"I never thought of prayer in that way," confessed the conductor. "I was not taught to pray as a child. Since then I have heard it said that prayer is soothing to nervous women and little children, but that men ought to be above such weakness. Thinking this the truth I have made it the rule of my conduct. I am esteemed by my associates, try to do what is right by my family, and enjoy the fullest confidence of the officials of the company. In fact, in the whole circle of my acquaintances I know no man that prays. And here you are like a traveler from another world advocating a theory that is unknown or ignored by the rank and file of the working man. How do you account for it?"

"Before we proceed to discuss the conduct of other men," resumed the priest, "let me ask you a few personal questions. May I take it for granted that you believe in a personal God and acknowledge your absolute dependence on His good pleasure?" The conductor nodded.

"And are you willing to admit," proceeded the priest, "that this personal God not only knows all things, but understands what is best for each of us in particular? That in His goodness and mercy He is most anxious to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of everyone? Do you admit that as His creature you have an inborn obligation to adore and to thank Him, to obey Him and to make reparation for disobeying Him, to promote His glory and to ask His help in doing so? Do you realize that at the moment of death you must appear before Him in judgment and be found worthy either of eternal happiness or of eternal misery?"

"Go easy, please," pleaded the conductor, "you are not rushing me into new realms of thought, but make me realize that my conduct in the sight of God has a very vital bearing on my personal happiness. Viewed in that light I see that prayer is both beneficial and necessary. But it makes a man feel small. It goes against the tendency of human nature, and is calculated to rob a man of his self-reliance and efficiency. And besides, as I remarked before, I know of no man that prays."

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The 92,887,000 Catholics assigned to America include North America and South America. Last year's figures for the United States were 17,023,879. There are 4,532 priests in Great Britain, of whom 3,014 are secular clergy and 1,518 members of the regular orders. About 250 seculars and 200 regulars, included in the above totals, are serving as Chaplains with the forces. There are 2,352 Catholic churches, chapels and stations in Great Britain, 454 of which are in Scotland. The building restrictions are, of course, the explanation of these figures, being practically the same as last year's. During the War the erection of churches has been suspended.

ONLY THE CROSS

"Today, in the general devastation of war, the only thing left standing upright is the Cross," attests Lieutenant Antoine Redier in his recent book, "Comrades in Courage." He then describes as follows a wayside crucifix which the shells have wonderfully spared:

"Above that rise of the ground, which hid it until now, stands the thin silhouette of a cross. It is of iron and the Christ is dolorously bending His head. About its base are four stumps cut off almost level with the ground. They are all that remain of the beautiful trees which once sheltered this pastoral shrine. It stands alone amongst a labyrinth of *boyaux*. . . . Our trenches, in this region, curve forward in a salient. It is as if the enemy had been obliged to draw a respectful half circle round the image of Christ. . . . Resting on the pierced feet is a bunch of withered flowers. . . . At the change of guard we pass beneath the extended arms of this Christ, on the way into the front line. I don't know whether many of us say a prayer to Him when we cross His gaunt shadow in the moonlight, but God will remember the one, he he ever so humble, who once put down his flowers and called on Him there. He has commanded that His image be not destroyed and that it remain here on our horizon. With head gently bowed and wide-open arms, He watches over the dead of the plain and blesses the living, devout or otherwise, who, covered with dust, their backs bent under the weight of their knapsacks—go in long silent columns to take their fighting posts."

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301,960,485 CATHOLICS IN WORLD'S POPULATION

ONE-THIRD OF THIS GRAND TOTAL IS FOUND ON WESTERN CONTINENT

According to the Catholic Directory of Great Britain for 1918, the total estimated Catholic population of the world is 301,960,485. Figures of this kind can only be accepted as approximately correct, and the present great war is a factor which must greatly affect any estimate of numbers, introducing an element of uncertainty for which no doubt due allowance has been made by the compilers of the figures. The distribution of Catholics is in round numbers, as follows: Europe, 190,770,000; Asia, 6,208,000; Africa, 2,817,000; America, 92,887,000; Australasia, 9,289,000. The Catholics in the British Empire

hoods," remarked the conductor with enthusiasm. "I see I have been mistaken. Teach me to pray, will you?"

"I will do more," replied the priest. "I will make a Catholic out of you, and give you a first-class ticket to heaven. It's a pleasure to meet an honest man like you."—Denver Register.

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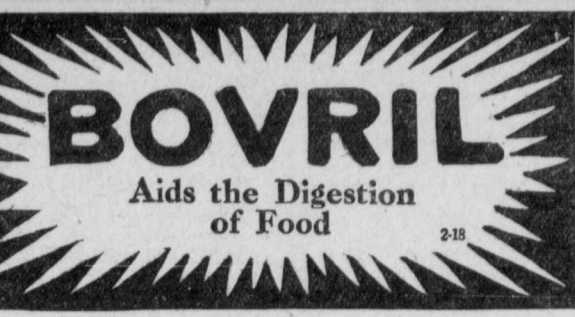
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