

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1917

Catholic Church fearlessly withstanding the spirit of the age maintained the ideals of Christian education thereby in great measure saving Christian civilization.

When it shall please God to restore again to this war-stricken world the blessings of peace there is good reason to hope that civilization purified so as by fire of its pagan ideals and tendencies will come to realize that it rests not on progress or evolution or Kultur or education, but on the eternal truths taught by Christ, who for society as well as for the individual has the words of eternal life.

Civilization is not a failure; but in so far as it is un-Christian it is decadent. It will be saved, reanimated and invigorated only by the reign of Christ.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Our political parties in Ontario seem to think that the highest statesmanship consists in jockeying each other for popular favor.

With the leader of the opposition committed to woman suffrage the Government thinks it safe and prudent, wise and statesmanlike, to get for itself whatever kudos and political favor that may attach to that measure.

What do the people think of it? What do the women themselves think of the suffrage? No one knows. The matter has never come before either the men or the women of Ontario for decision.

If we remember aright a year or so ago out of 4,000 women in Toronto who already enjoyed the municipal franchise only about 400 or 10 per cent. exercised it. Why should the franchise be thrust on the women of this province if they do not desire it. Why should a noisy minority decide the question?

And for that matter what right has a government or parliament to decide the question without the semblance of a mandate from the people who elected them?

Women should have the suffrage just as soon as the majority of them desire to have it. Not before.

THE STERILITIES OF "SCIENCE" NO SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION

The age through which we are passing, or perhaps through which we have just passed, has been marked by what has been considered the progress of physical science to the point at which the old landmarks of the Christian faith have been swept away. It is true that many who held that "Science" and faith are incompatible were ignorant of the science of theology, and many were ignorant alike of physical science and theology. A vague but very widespread notion that "Science" had disproved the truths of Christianity together with an equally vague apprehension of Christian truths created a favorable soil for the reception of the seed of unbelief. On the other hand the poorly instructed modern Christian saw the witness to his faith divided against itself—a multitude of conflicting sects whose ministers anxious to be considered abreast of the age, or in advance of it, were the first to sacrifice Christian truth to the arrogant claims and pretensions of "Science." It kept them busy, too; for they often reached a scientific position with their white flag of surrender flying only to find that it was already abandoned by the scientists. With the rabble of camp-followers they trail along, nevertheless, frantically eager to preach the "religion of the future" though the hungry sheep here and now look up and are not fed.

Out of this confusion of theological tongues and away from the sterilities of modern "Science" many are groping their way to the light of truth and the meaning of life. A writer in the current Nineteenth Century is an interesting example.

He first states the fact of the decay of Christian faith:

"Previously to the redeeming effects of the War, the fundamental fact of our time, a fact which has been coloring and moulding all social and political phenomena, is the decay amongst the masses of belief in God and in a hereafter."

Not concerned to affirm or deny "what are known as the Christian verities" he avers that the fact of the alleged unbelief will "be accepted by the great majority of thinking men and women, of whom vast numbers will deeply deplore its truth."

"The cause of this seismic shifting of the foundations of Western civilization is in view. It is the

apparent (we do not say the real) incompatibility of scientific knowledge with orthodox Christian doctrine."

In the light of the fact of modern unbelief the writer discusses the sociological value of religion:

"All human experience teaches that, without moral sanctions, civilization crumbles, because its cement can exist if belief in what we mean by God and a future life be removed? Analysis of courses shows that, before the dawn of history, races and tribes most have tended to perish or persevere in proportion to the degree in which morality (including in that term self-sacrifice) waxed or grew. Since that dawn primitive morality—using that word in its widest sense—has been preserved to civilized peoples only so long as religious sanctions endured."

Here we have a thoughtful student of human history coming to a conclusion which the Catholic Church teaches as a fundamental principle: The foundation of morality is religion and other than this it has none.

Our author later on continues: "For though, as to the origin of religions, libraries have been written, above all controversy and beyond all doubt, one fact emerges, like a mountain towering above a mist—the fact that religious belief possesses 'survival value.' Let anation or a civilization believe in God and in a hereafter, and it tends to live. Let it lose those two beliefs, and it tends to die."

The writer is not a Catholic. Far from it. Thoughtful, studious and sincere though he be his conception of the Catholic Church is as crude as a Fiji islander's idea of "Science." "Wherever its power extended, the Church of Rome made death the penalty of mental life." There is no more use quarrelling with this attitude of mind than with a man born blind for not being able to see.

But in spite of this he sees that Christianity, yea even that very Church of Rome, breathed the breath of life into the civilization of Europe which it created out of the elements of decadent Rome and the savage barbarian invaders.

"If this be doubted, let us conceive, if we can, what would have been the state of Europe, after the fall of Rome, had Christianity never come to lighten its misty gloom. . . . Who shall picture Christendom without Christ? The horrors of anarchy, of massacre, of conflict without ruth, which were the portion of civilization in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, would have remained unrelieved by the dawn of a coming day. Chivalry which, in the name of Mary, sought to make woman sacred, chivalry which taught the succor of the weak, and the righting of the wrong, chivalry which throve to ennoble war, would have been as a torch unlighted in a world of brute force. Western learning, preserved as it was but with difficulty, and almost overwhelmed by waves of barbarism, must have utterly passed away. Roman law, and Roman tradition, and the foundation for future development which Rome had laid, must have been lost forever. The vision which the northern tribes saw of their savage gods would have continued for long ages predominant over western mankind. The thought of Paradise would have meant something akin to the warrior's Valhalla where the souls of the brave drank blood out of the skulls of their foes. And when that fierce dream dissolved in the dust of years, what creed could have succeeded it save a materialism as gross and grovelling as that which now, in the apparent decadence of Christianity, has been preached ceaselessly by socialists in the streets of English towns? Unless some inspired teacher had arisen, able to lead mankind to nobler ways, the contemplation of medieval Europe, stripped of that religion, which was at once its soul and its cement, is one from which the mind draws back in dread. When moral habit, acquired under forgotten conditions, ceased to restrain human brutality, when no hope of heaven, and no fear of hell curbed the impetus of license or shielded the violence of fury, when science was unborn and knowledge dead, the men of this continent must have fallen into a corruption which would have brought subjugation from peoples beyond their borders who still possessed vital belief."

It is something, it is a great thing that those of whom the writer is a type have come so far. Under the world shaking shock of war, the sterilities of unbelief, the worthlessness of scientific guesses, so far as the mystery and meaning of life is concerned, have become manifest. The impetus given to the study of history already, as in the case of the writer under consideration, has led men to see and acknowledge that European civilization is essentially the creation of the Catholic Church. Deeper study, it may confidently be hoped, will point to the Catholic Church as the only possible preserver of the civilization which she has created.

SERVILITY AND INDIVIDUALISM

In a recent article we discussed some of the reasons why, as Catholics and citizens, we have not accomplished as much as we might. The subject is so important that we have decided to return to it for the purpose of dealing with two other obstacles that stand in the way of our progress.

The first of these is the spirit of servility. It is a spirit that has been bred in the bone through long centuries of persecution in which our forbears 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 coreligionists 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. It is the duty of every Catholic to promote, as far as in him lies, the general welfare of the community in which he lives. The participation of intelligent and honorable Catholic men in civic affairs tends to remove many prejudices and to bring about a more favorable attitude towards the Church and to improve its standing locally. It is well not to lose sight of the fact that, to the average Protestant man, the mention of the Catholic Church does not suggest the College of Cardinals and a world-wide institution, but the particular clergyman and people with whom he is acquainted.

Again, compare the attitude of neighbors towards a young man who is on his way to the priesthood with their bearing towards one who is achieving success in a secular profession. In any country in the world there would be a difference in reverence, but amongst our people there is much more than that—there is some kind of jealousy in the case of the latter, or rather perhaps a looking upon him as presumptuous in aiming to stand beside "his betters." As a consequence of this we lend no assistance and are apparently indifferent to those who might become able Catholic leaders through success in a profession or business calling.

Another hindrance to organized effort, and consequently to success, is individualism. This species of selfishness—for that is an authorized synonym for the word—often manifests itself in parishes. The congregation is quite proud of what it has accomplished locally, although it may be nothing to boast about; but it is deaf to any outside calls for assistance and is only in a vague way interested in the general welfare of the Church. Its mental and spiritual outlook, too, is narrow and restricted, because there is none of that enlarging of the heart and mind that is the effect of generous effort and sacrifice, and because there is no reflux into a parish that isolates itself of that larger Catholic spirit that is abroad in the world.

A striking antithesis to this individualism has been recently manifested in the little Diocese of Antigonish. Its people are not wealthy, yet the Church in their midst is in a flourishing condition, and in the matter of higher Catholic education they have set a standard for the Dominion. These local activities, far from abating, have but intensified their interest in Catholic works of zeal, as is instanced by the fact that they recently contributed more than four thousand dollars to the Church Extension. That is the spirit that is needed to meet the wants of the present hour.

There is another and extreme form of individualism that reveals itself in the large number of old maids and old bachelors in some rural districts.

Often when a son expresses a desire to marry his parents discourage his aspiration. They have the power to make him choose between remaining single or seeking his livelihood elsewhere; and they use that power in what they consider to be their son's interest. Very often, however, their motive is none other than disguised selfishness.

Not unfrequently the sons are themselves to blame. Either through lack of ambition and a sense of responsibility, or attachment to their present happy-go-lucky mode of existence, they defer the establishment of a home of their own. Apart from the moral dangers incident to such an abnormal state of life, we see the outward effects in the dwindling congregations, the half-empty school rooms and the species of dry rot that manifests itself in some sections. The men who are responsible for this are recreant to their duty, not only to the State but to the Church. They are shirkers and deserving only of the consideration that is due to a shirker.

THE GLEANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE DEVOTION of the proceeds of a concert held at Mabou, N. S., to the Father Fraser Chinese Mission Fund, as announced in last week's CATHOLIC RECORD opens up a new field for endeavor in this direction. The handsome sum of \$140 produced by the Mabou effort may well set a mark for other parishes throughout Canada to aspire to, and it would be difficult to name a more inspiring or more deserving object. The Father Fraser Fund has not alone been of inestimable service to the good missionary himself, but it has gone far to arouse the missionary spirit of the Catholics of Canada. Why should not the Nova Scotia idea be taken up in other communities, and the welfare of the Chinese mission, which has already been productive of so rich a harvest of souls, be placed by some such united effort on an assured and permanent foundation?

IN A PARAGRAPH which has been going the rounds of the press, Miss Adelaide Anne Procter, author of "A Lost Chord" and other imperishable lyrics, is referred to as the daughter of Richard A. Procter, the noted English astronomer and lecturer. This is curious. Miss Procter was born in 1825, whereas Richard A. Procter did not see the light until 1834. Miss Procter was the daughter of Bryan Waller Procter, or "Barry Cornwall," as he is known to fame, the contemporary and friend of Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and most of the literary celebrities of the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries. That being so it is difficult to realize that Procter died at so comparatively recent a date as 1874. He was then in his eighty-eighth year.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER became a Catholic in 1849, when she was in her twenty-fourth year, and in that step was followed some years later by her two younger sisters. It is pleasant to recall that her advent to literature was brought about several years after that event through the instrumentality of Charles Dickens, who is supposed by many to have cherished bitter feelings against Catholics. Be that as it may, he at least did not show it in his dealings with Adelaide Procter. The circumstance of their first acquaintance is thus related by Dickens in his Introduction to the "Complete Poems" of his young contributor and friend.

"IN THE spring of the year 1853," wrote Dickens, "I observed, as conductor of the weekly journal, Household Words, a short poem among the proffered contributions, very different as I thought, from the shoal of verses perpetually setting through the office of such a periodical, and possessing much more merit. Its authoress was quite unknown to me. She was one Miss Mary Berwick, whom I had never heard of; and she was to be addressed by letter, if addressed at all, at a circulating library in the western district of London. Through this channel, Miss Berwick was informed that her poem was accepted and was invited to send another. She complied, and became a regular and frequent contributor. Many letters passed between the journal and Miss Berwick, but Miss Berwick herself was never seen."

DICKENS THEN goes on to relate how he made the personal acquaintance of his contributor, who turned

out to be the daughter of his old and dear friend, "Barry Cornwall." Happening to dine with Procter in December of 1854, and mentioning to his host his interesting connection with his anonymous protegee, her real name and personality was revealed. Needless perhaps, to say, the connection was more strongly cemented, and Miss Procter continued to contribute to Household Words up to the time of her death. Dickens professed the greatest friendship and regard for her, which was certainly not lessened by the fact of her adherence to the Catholic Faith. Whether, in spite of that, he was, as some aver, a bigot, is another question, which we propose to discuss in our next issue.

THE NEW BIRTH of amity between Great Britain and Russia, and the community of interests arising out of the War, recall the first efforts made in England over three hundred years ago to establish reciprocal trade relations with the Muscovite Empire. English trade in Russia, says a writer in Kelly's Monthly Trade Review, dates back to the reign of Edward VI, and to the days of the celebrated navigator, Richard Chancellor. In the year 1553, Chancellor, who, having explored the White Sea and discovered Archangel, made his way to Moscow (the then capital of Russia) and obtained an audience with the Tsar, Ivan Vassilievich.

CHANCELLOR was the bearer of a letter to his Imperial Majesty from the English King, the purport of which was that mutual commercial relations might be established between Russia and England. The proposition was favorably received, and in March, 1554, Chancellor returned to England with a letter embodying the Imperial sanction, which was in due course delivered to Queen Mary, Edward VI. having in the interval died. Chancellor himself died in 1556, but in the meantime (February 26, 1555), the Russia Company had been founded under a special charter from Philip and Mary, with the express object of fostering trade with Russia. Branches of this Company were established at Kholmogori and Vologda, and from that time onward quite a colony of English merchants and traders became domiciled in Russia, and opened trading depots in Archangel and elsewhere.

THE COMMERCIAL relationship thus established, flourished and extended, and for over two centuries the Englishman had practically no foreign rival in Russian trade. But just here the traditional insularity and conservatism of the race began to operate to his disadvantage. He seemed content with his past achievements, and ignoring the coming peril arising out of the "peaceful penetration" of the aggressive German, was satisfied to let well enough alone. Failing, then, to adopt himself to the new conditions created by this German invasion, the Englishman gradually lost his hold. British trade in Russia gradually disappeared by a process of elimination, and was supplanted by that of Germany. The extent to which this change has taken place is demonstrated by recently published statistics. "Time," says the writer already quoted, "has now, through the War, brought back to the British nation an unprecedented opportunity to retrieve itself in Russia"—an opportunity in which, it may be added, Canada has every chance to participate.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

That Germany's Submarine Campaign is a very real menace to Great Britain is made evident by the speeches both of Sir Edward Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lloyd George the Prime Minister. To overcome it will require the realization of the hopes placed in the Navy and a grim determination to put up with whatever sacrifices may be necessary until such time as the Navy shall have succeeded.

This passage from the Prime Minister's speech sounds a note different from those who had already contemptuously dismissed the submarine peril as non-existent: Mr. Lloyd George said that for some time there has been a shortage of tonnage required for the general needs of the nation, and even slight shortage in the tonnage for military purposes. The nation should realize absolutely what the conditions were. "If we take drastic measures," he continued, "we can cope with the enormous tangle into which food supply conflicts between the different government departments got them

measures for dealing with the menace, disaster is before us."

THE SURMARINE AND THE FARMER

Premier Lloyd George in his statement on the food and shipping problems struck what many may regard as an alarming note when he placed before the British people the two alternatives of making still bigger individual sacrifices or of facing national disaster. In his judgment the situation calls for "the gravest measures." He has no doubt as to ultimate victory if the country willingly accepts as inevitable the drastic steps taken by the Government to overcome the German submarine blockade. These steps impose additional restrictions on non-essential imports, a further reduction in brewing and distilling outputs, the fixing of guaranteed minimum prices for wheat, oats and potatoes, and compulsory agricultural production.

The gravity of the situation is due to two causes—shortage in last year's harvest throughout the world and shortage of mercantile shipping. Under the most favorable circumstances the shortage of food would have been felt in the United Kingdom. Speaking in the House of Commons in January last, Mr. Lloyd George forecasted the present low margin of food reserves when he said: "The main facts are plain. The harvests of the United States and of Canada are failures, and the Argentine promises badly. Russia is unavailable and our own harvest is poor, while only three-eighths of the normal winter sowing has taken place, owing to bad weather." It was under these circumstances the Asquith Government decided to appoint a Food Controller, and that minimum prices for wheat, oats and potatoes were at that time fixed. These prices are now guaranteed to the farmers for all wheat, oats and potatoes raised. The last step has been taken in nationalizing the war purposes—the nationalization of the soil. Before the War the English agricultural laborer was paid about two and a half dollars a week. For the period of the War at least he will get a little over six dollars per week. The farm laborers now are largely women, and men unfit for military service.

Against the submarine danger Britain relies upon her navy, her shipbuilders and the sacrifices of her people. Food reserves are low in Great Britain. Preparing secretly for this War Germany did not neglect her basic industry. She increased enormously her agricultural production. One important fact to bear in mind is that 93% of the land of Germany is owned by the cultivator of the soil, as compared with 11% in England and Wales. A hundred-acre farm supports seventy five persons in Germany against fifty in England, and produces considerably more to the acre than the British farm, which is favored by better soil and climate. But for the efficiency of the German farmer the German Empire would have been at the end of its food resources long before the end of the second year of war. This is the opinion of Lord Selborne, former Minister of Agriculture in England.—Globe, Feb. 24.

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T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

"GRAVEST ANXIETY AND PAINFUL SUSPENSE"

THE IRISH HORIZON CLOUDED—THE ORATORY OF LLOYD GEORGE

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

London, Feb. 24.—The week that has just passed may be best described as one of painful suspense of a calm before the storm. There has been that deceptive pause which would ordinarily foretell of an outburst which precedes a devastating thunderstorm.

On all the fronts, but more especially where the armies of England, France and Belgium are facing the German forces in the West, there is a feeling in the air, felt by all the belligerents, apparently, that the enemy armies will be in a death grapple any day.

Millions of men are waiting, with an unusual feeling of unrest, for the signal which will send them forth to clutch at the throats of their enemies and yet through it all there is a strong feeling that on this great pending struggle will rest the most decisive result of the War.

Germany is apparently watching with tigerish passion the fight between the German submarine fleets and the merchantmen of the world which are seeking to bring food and supplies to the Entente countries; and along the stage already crowded with Titanic figures, stalks Ireland, demanding the attention of Great Britain's leaders and her own immediate liberation. Thus, though there is outwardly but little excitement in England and beatings of an early peace come only from a discredited group of cranks, inwardly there is a feeling, everywhere, of the gravest anxiety and the most painful suspense.

From this whole crowded state of national affairs, there emerges Lloyd George as the man bearing the chief responsibility. He it was that called the first conference of the sailors of all countries to discuss the submarine situation. He cut through the enormous tangle into which food supply conflicts between the different government departments got them