

The Catholic Record

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NICOLAUS COPERNICUS

Cracow, because it is very much in the zone of battle in the great war, is now very much in the gaze of the world. From this historic city the most widely known Polish writer of the present day, Sienkiewicz, whose romance Quo Vadis has been translated into more than thirty languages, issued his appeal to fellow-countrymen to support Russia in the present history-making struggle.

A writer in the London Free Press closed a recent article thus: "But to the student of modern science the most soul-stirring thing about Cracow is the fact that the beautiful Church of St. Anne, there, keeps safe housed in marble, the bones of the father of modern astronomy, Nicolaus Copernicus, commonly called Copernicus.

Copernicus, modest student of the sky track, who in the solitude of his chamber, bounded by four walls, made himself a king of infinite space; and blazed away among the stars for Bruno, Galileo, the Herschels and all the glorious companies to me—De Orbium Coelestium Revolutionibus!"

"The great astronomer died with his fingers plucking at the pages of his just published book, whose printed words he fast-darkening eyes were never to see; no, and his ears were never to hear the savage roar with which that book was greeted. But in Cracow, to-day, a marble man holds a marble book in his hand in testimony of the fact that truth conquers all things."

That "savage roar" suggested this brief sketch of the life of Nicolaus Copernicus known throughout the world by the Latinized form of his Polish name. He was born at Thorn in 1473 and died at Frauenburg, 1543. His father emigrated from Cracow to Thorn and married the sister of Lucas Watzelrode, later Prince-Bishop of Ermland. Of the four children, the eldest and youngest, Nicholas and Andreas, adopted the clerical career while the older daughter became a Cistercian Nun and Abbess of Culm. The younger married. The whole family belonged to the Third Order of St. Dominic.

Nicolaus Nicolai de Thornunia (Nicholas son of Nicholas of Thorn) was matriculated in the University of Cracow in 1491 where he studied classics, mathematics, drawing and perspective. His uncle, the Bishop, had himself studied in the great Papal University of Bologna, had his nephews elected canons (1497-98) by the Chapter of Frauenburg in order that they might have the necessary means to study in Italy. In 1497, accordingly, Nicolaus became a student of canon law in the University of Bologna where he also studied Greek and became a disciple of Novara, then professor of astronomy. In the Jubilee year, 1500, Copernicus gave astronomical lectures in the Eternal City which were so well received that he here awoke to the vocation of founding a new astronomy. The brothers obtained from the chapter of Frauenburg a further two years' leave of absence to continue their studies. In Ferrara he studied medicine and took his degree of Doctor of Canon Law. After his university studies Copernicus practised medicine for six years, being sought by bishops and princes but especially by the poor whom he served gratis. There is no document to show that he ever received higher orders, but the fact that his name was placed on the list in 1587 for the vacant bishopric of Ermland makes it probable that at least in

later life he had entered the priesthood.

The main lines of his great work were laid down at Heilsberg where his uncle the bishop resided; at Frauenburg, with scanty instrumental means, he sought to test it by observation. He was an extremely busy man filling as he did many important offices, but the towers of Heilsberg, of Allenstein and of Frauenburg became so many observatories, and his great work "on the Revolutions of the Celestial Bodies" bears testimony to his unremitting observations of sun, moon and planets. His reputation was such that as early as 1514 the Lateran Council asked for his opinion on the reform of the ecclesiastical calendar. His answer was that the length of the year and of the months and the motions of the sun and moon were not yet sufficiently known to attempt a reform. The incident, however, spurred him on, as he himself writes to Pope Paul III., to make more accurate observations and these actually served, seventy years later, as a basis for the working out of the Gregorian calendar. In 1580, twenty-five years after his university career, he had finished his great work, at least in his own mind, but hesitated long about publishing it. An abstract written for friends was circulated and his astronomical views began to be generally known. Johann Albrecht Widmanstadt lectured on the Copernican system in Rome; Clement VII. approved and Cardinal Schonberg transmitted to the author a formal demand for full publication. Not, however, until 1540 did his friends succeed in prevailing upon him to assent, when his great friend and enthusiastic disciple George Joachim Rheticus printed the Narratio prima or preliminary account of the new solar system. Rheticus next secured for publication the manuscript of a preliminary chapter of the great work on plane and spherical trigonometry. Finally Copernicus, feeling the weight of his sixty-eight years, yielded, as he writes to Paul III., to the entreaties of Cardinal Schonberg, of Bishop Giese of Culm, and of other learned men to surrender his manuscripts for publication. Bishop Giese charged Rheticus, as the ablest disciple of the great master, with the task of editing the work. Rheticus intended to take the manuscript to Wittenberg and have it published at the university; but, owing to the hostility prevailing there against the Copernican system, only the chapter on trigonometry was published. Rheticus then turned to Schoner of Nuremberg who together with Oslander accepted the charge and engaged Petreus of that city to print it.

Meanwhile Rheticus tried to resume his chair in Wittenberg, but Luther's university would have none of him on account of his Copernican views on astronomy, and he went to Leipzig. He was thus prevented from giving his personal attention to the edition, nor was the author himself able to supervise it. Hence the reformer Oslander, knowing the attitude of Luther and Melancthon, was able to insert an anonymous preface and the word "Hypothesis" on the title page. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "Copernicus was seized with apoplexy and paralysis towards the close of 1542, and died on the 24th of May, 1543, happily unconscious that the fine Epistle, in which he had dedicated his life's work to Paul III., was marred of its effect by an anonymous preface slipped in by Andreas Oslander with a view to disarming prejudice by insisting upon the purely hypothetical character of the reasonings it introduced."

The "savage roar" is like a lot of other bugaboos about pre-Reformation centuries which laid the foundations broad and deep of the science, the learning, and the civilization of which we are the ungrateful heirs. However history is steadily lighting up those great centuries and in another generation or two even the popular superstition which still passes as current history with many in a superficial age will flee before the light.

MODERNISM Few there are who are not familiar with the term, but to say just what the term signifies would be to most people difficult. Our Protestant friends, to judge from their comments from time to time, imagine that it is something which seriously threatens to rend the Catholic Church asunder. Both Catholics and Protestants will be glad to find in the Rev. Dr. O'Gorman's sermon, which we publish in this issue, a

historic and doctrinal exposition of this much discussed movement, an exposition, which by training and experience in European universities, Doctor O'Gorman is singularly well fitted to make. Nevertheless, the thorough knowledge of his subject has not led him to forget directness and lucidity required for popular treatment of a difficult subject.

READING FOR THE LONG WINTER EVENINGS

We take particular pleasure—and no little pride—in announcing the fact that we have been able to extend considerably the list of books in our Home Library.

If any one will take the trouble to figure out the cost of freight or express charges, duty, postage or expressage in sending to purchaser handling, packing and correspondence, he will be forced to the conclusion that the profit to publishers and dealer has been brought reasonably close to the irreducible minimum.

Behind the idea of our Home Library were the complaints of the comparatively unreasonable price of Catholic books. Now the reason for the condition of things complained of was very obvious to publishers. An example will make it clear. A profit of \$1 a head on the ten thousand and cattle of a great ranch would net the owner the handsome sum of \$10,000. The same profit per head on ten cattle would be a long time making a millionaire of a farmer.

This fundamental business consideration holds good in the business of Catholic publishers as elsewhere. The CATHOLIC RECORD conceived the idea of freely using its great facilities for advertising in order to make the multiplier of profit ten thousand instead of ten. The publishers saw the point. The experiment has been a very decided success. The scattered and relatively small English-speaking Catholic population of Canada have been enabled to provide for family reading literature at once wholesome, interesting and Catholic. The Catholic family without Catholic literature has no Catholic atmosphere in the home.

Read over the list, make your selection and then note the stimulating influence on all that makes for wholesome Catholic home life. We feel quite certain that you will pity those who live in the comfortable shelters that smug and self-complacent vulgarisms miscel "homes." Whatever else it lacks a Catholic home should have well-filled bookshelves from which will radiate a vivifying influence on the intellectual and spiritual life of the family.

ONE GREAT LESSON OF THE WAR

There is no doubt that persistent temperance education has accomplished much good. Nevertheless it has left the great mass of the people unconvinced, for in those very countries where temperance education and temperance legislation have been most persistent the consumption of alcoholic beverages has enormously increased. This is not necessarily an argument against either temperance work or temperance legislation. It is an interesting fact and goes to show that it is an extremely difficult thing to educate people out of long cherished traditional belief. And it is a long cherished traditional belief that alcohol is good for the health. It was for generations, and is yet to a far greater extent than temperance workers admit, considered the good household remedy for most of the ills which flesh is heir to. It is this not ineradicable but uneducated belief that is the rock on which many an exaggerated and perverted philippic against alcohol shatters itself harmlessly. Not, however, without harm to the cause it is intended to serve. The good old time-honored advice to the speaker not to get ahead of his audience has not been taken to heart by many temperance orators. The average speaker who thunders against alcohol as something essentially evil is miles ahead of the average hearer who in his heart is convinced that alcohol is good though he is quite ready to admit that its abuse is very bad and that it is singularly liable to be abused.

Now we think that there is one great fact of tremendous significance that should not be allowed to escape serious consideration. France is fighting for national existence. Defeat means that a thousand years of glorious history will close in darkness and national ruin. In this supreme crisis France has prohibited the sale of absinthe.

That is the strong drink of the French.

The issue of the great struggle may open up to the young giant-nation, Russia, a national career surpassing the dreams of her most ardent patriots. In Russia the strong drink vodka is a government monopoly yielding an enormous revenue. Yet in this time of supreme test Russia prohibits vodka. And this despatch from Petrograd to the Times is eloquent:

"Grand Duke Nicholas, the Russian commander in chief, has overriden the decision of the Council of Ministers favoring the sale of beer and light wines and has now ordered that, wherever martial laws prevail, the sale of alcoholic drinks of any kind shall be forbidden."

Great Britain has limited the hours during which licensed houses may be open.

These are facts. We do not intend to moralize on them or to emphasize the moral which they point. But we believe that they are facts of such tremendous import that they will go far towards eradicating the world-wide superstition about alcohol.

YOURSELF AND THE NEIGHBORS

"Yourself And The Neighbours" by Seumas MacManus (Devin. Adair Co., New York) is just the kind of book to help us forget, for a brief hour at least, the tragic happenings of these stupendous history-making days. A collection of charming stories, told in the quaint, inimitable style of our old friend, Seumas MacManus, "Yourself And The Neighbours" affords us many a delightful and sympathetic glimpse over the half doors of humble cabins into lives far from being as barren as the moors or as rude as the hills about them. Brimful of "the humour from heaven" that has ever lightened the cares and the sorrows of Ireland, with here and there a tear to balance the laughter, and now and then a fascinating touch of the mystery and magic that have never deserted the hills and glens of the old land, expressing in every line the fertility of soul which, ages ago, the victims of Cromwell chose in preference to fertility of soil—never since regretting the choice, for, was it not the wiser part? "Yourself And The Neighbours" will surely find a warm and welcome corner in many a heart and home. Among such a collection of gems, each rich in its own way, it may be hard to pick a favorite, but The Return of Rafferty is something that could happen only in a land of Beauty, Love and Music like Ireland. "He was a man, was Rafferty, as well as a fiddler," with "Love, Love" his one great theme, lifting the world "star-high" for him, and with all the beauty and magic of all created things in his wonderful music. The Will of the Wise Man takes us far, far back to the royal days of old when wise men were as common as wattle sticks in Ireland and the fame of their wit and wisdom re-echoed through the world. The Priest's Boy, The Postmistress, The Master, The Beggar, are among the unique character-studies gathered from a land incomparably rich in interesting material to be found in this delightful book. The Home-Come Yankee has a particular flavor and charm which no reader can fail to appreciate. When God Sent Sunday ends the book and fittingly does so, for in truth, it is "the limit" and as such must remain till Seumas MacManus writes another one.

BENSON'S LAST NOVEL

The appearance of a Benson book was always eagerly anticipated by the reading public, but his recent and untimely death invests "Oddfish" with a certain element of pathos. It is hard to realize that this is the last effort of his gifted pen; that never again shall the printed page voice the thoughts of that wonderful mind; that from henceforth we shall look in vain amongst the lists of forthcoming books for the name of Robert Hugh Benson.

In "Oddfish," as in some of his most noteworthy novels, Mgr. Benson turns to history for his subject. The time is the later years of the reign of Charles II., and it is thus in a sense a companion volume to "The King's Achievement" "By What Authority," "The Queen's Tragedy," and "Come Rack, Come Rope," which dealt with the days of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and Mary. We think it will be accounted one of his greatest books, seriously rivaling "Come Rack, Come Rope" in power and interest. The description of the King's death bed is as fine as anything Ben-

son ever wrote, and all through the book his delineation of Charles' character is a masterpiece of the first water. So, too, in our author's hands the actors in the famous "Rye-House Plot" are made to live again, and we get a vivid picture of those desperate days of intrigue and persecution when Charles and James sat upon a volcano gilded like a throne. The various attempts to keep the Papist James from the succession; the martyrdom of two heroic companies of priests, the impeachment of Stafford, the vacillating policy of the King; the over-impetuosity of the heir-apparent, are all portrayed with Benson's well-known power. And through it all runs the golden thread of a love story which, though slight and tragic in its ending, is as winning a story of the relations between a man and a maid as could be imagined or desired.

Benson is dead, and it is not for us to estimate his greatness. But had he done nothing else but given us these splendid novels of the days of persecution he would deserve well of his co-religionists. For since his works were read by Catholic and non-Catholic alike none but God Himself can estimate the good he effected by setting the much distorted Reformation epoch in its proper perspective. No man can read Benson's books and continue to hug to himself the old delusion about those dark and evil days. At the desk, no less than in the pulpit, Benson was a missionary. He is the pleasantest, as well as the most successful of school masters. No study, no matter how exacting, of the dry bones of history could so familiarise the reader with the momentous happenings of those stirring times. The formal history is a picture in outline. Benson gives us moving pictures that grip the imagination. No one who wants to know the true story of how England was robbed of the faith can afford to be without Benson's historical novels. The reading of them will teach us, moreover, to value more and more the possession of this sublime gift ourselves. COLUMBA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

AN IDEA of the number of Belgian refugees in Great Britain is furnished by our Catholic exchanges, who are devoting a share of their space each week to a summary of war news in the Flemish language. A heading like this: "NIEUWS IN 'T FLAAMSCH VOOR DE BELGISCHE ONTVLUCHTEN," certainly looks unfamiliar in an English newspaper, but it has an eloquence all its own as exemplifying the spirit of charity and fraternity.

ACCORDING to the daily papers the Canadian end of the institution known as the "McAll Mission" has been stirred into renewed activity in France by reason of the War. As is well known, this is a thoroughly Protestant institution, which for years past, has, under the guise of philanthropy, dispensed the superfluous funds of American millionaires and others in an effort to undermine the faith of the French people. Like all such proselytising agencies in Catholic countries the McAll harvest in what might be called practical results—that is, the making of Baptists or Methodists out of individual Frenchmen—has been quite nil, but of its share in the growth of godlessness in France we are not quite so sure.

BUT OF ALL times these sectarian interlopers are out of place in the France of to-day. The intrusion of the "McAll Mission" is officious and impertinent at all times, but in the present juncture it is little short of infamous. The spiritual welfare of the French soldier, (whether on the field of battle, or in the barracks,) and of his family at home, is well looked after by his legitimate, spiritual guides, and the cutting across the line of these self-appointed creed iconoclasts, so far as it has any effect at all, makes only for disturbance and disorder. It is not a little remarkable that men can spend their substance in trying to "teach" others while their own hold upon revealed truth has become, in great measure, a thing of the past.

MUCH HAS BEEN written on the subject of recruiting in the United Kingdom, and from some sources have come ill-informed and ill-mannered reflections upon the progress of recruiting in Ireland. A contributor to the Glasgow Observer has been

sifting the facts in regard to this question, and, in parliamentary language, has laid some interesting figures upon the table. He finds that in October, 1913, that is, ten months before the war began, the combined figures for the Regulars, the Regular Reserve and the Special Reserve were: Great Britain, 373,938, or 91.5 per 10,000 of population. Ireland, 46,920, or 106.8 per 10,000 of population. In other words, for every 10,000 of their respective populations, Ireland supplied fifteen men more than was supplied by Great Britain.

THESE FIGURES are confirmed by a reference to one year's recruiting. Take the Army year, October 1st, 1912, to September 30th, 1913. For the Regular Army and Special Reserve combined the figures are: Great Britain, 41,330, or per 10,000 of population, 10.1; Ireland, 6,086, or per 10,000 of population, 13.8. Which means that in one year Irish recruiting districts contributed 13.8 per cent, to Regular Army and Reserve, while per head of population Ireland's share was only 9.7 per cent. The proportion is even greater than these figures show for the population statistics are these of the census of 1911, and between April, 1911, and October, 1913, the population of Great Britain increased while that of Ireland decreased.

THE WRITER in the Observer (Mr. W. G. Fallon, B. A.), enlarging upon these figures proceeds to show that from all information available the number of enlistments from the Orange counties of Ulster is so small as not to effect the figures either one way or the other. Prior to the declaration of war against Germany the Orange areas were notoriously deficient in furnishing recruits to the army. And all the world knows with what bad grace their leader Sir Edward Carson and his colleagues acted in this regard even after the opening of hostilities. Ulster has since sent her contingent to the front, but it was a calculated move, and not decided upon without an assumed proviso.

BUT THE comparison does not end here. Mr. Fallon promises a further elucidation of the subject of recruiting since the war opened. Meanwhile we may draw out his comparison further. What, it may well be asked, about the Irish in Great Britain? The Army Report for October, 1913, describes 33,242 men in the Regulars and Special Reserve as Irish. But the Report also notes that there are 51,200 Catholics in these services. A calculation based on the Army tables shows that there ought to be 8,500 Catholics in Great Britain who are in the Regular Reserve, and the conclusion is inevitable that of the 26,800 (odd) soldiers in Great Britain listed as Catholics, a very large proportion are of the Irish race. Therefore, allowing for these Catholics in Great Britain who are not Irish, Ireland's contribution to the Army is greater than England, Scotland, or Wales can show. Mr. Fallon's conclusion is that, adding the totals in the various services and making due allowance for the Orange element on the one hand, and for non-Irish Catholics on the other, Nationalist Ireland's share in the Imperial Army at the outbreak of the War was fully 50,000 men. In face of these figures criticism should go slowly.

AMONG CATHOLIC casualties in the Belgian campaign is that of Major Hugh Fraser of Lovat, a younger brother of Lord Lovat. Particulars of his death are not to hand, but from his well-known character as a soldier we may be sure he died heroically. He was a fine type of the Highland gentleman, and the member of a family which has sacrificed much and suffered much for its Catholic faith. Born forty years ago at Beaufort, he was the second son of the late Lord Lovat, and, like all his family, brought up to love and appreciate his own people and to make his residence among them. This, in face of the absenteeism of so many landed proprietors which has been so great a curse to Scotland and to Ireland, must be reckoned a distinguishing virtue, and, taken together with Major Fraser's natural gifts and happy disposition, accounts for the general affection in which he was held all through the Highlands. In the present war he was with the Scots Guards, which regiment has suffered so severely in the hostilities on the Marne and the Aisne. He is described as a born soldier who, had he lived, would surely have attained high rank. R. I. P.

OUR CANADIAN contemporary, The Presbyterian, makes much of the statement in regard to Governor Glynn of New York State that, although a Catholic he is an avowed partisan of the Public Schools. This may or may not be so—we have no information to the contrary—but, if a fact, it will have afforded small consolation to the Presbyterian to have read the morning after the late election that the same Governor Glynn's opponent was elected by the largest majority ever given to a candidate for Governor in the State of New York. The Catholics of the United States are making great sacrifices to maintain their efficient Parochial School System and to combat godless education. It is a reasonable deduction, therefore, that Governor Glynn's alleged lack of sympathy with his fellow-Catholics in this matter had not a little to do with his relegation to the obscurity from whence he came.

The Presbyterian also indulges in some rather ungracious remarks regarding the late Mgr. Benson. "His zeal for his adopted faith," it says, "in spite of great ability, rather spoiled both his artistic qualities and his judgment." Much depends, of course, upon how you appraise the qualities of an artist. There are those that think all art is summed up in the work of the "futurist" school, and, in regard to literature, the Presbyterian seems to see its ideal in the work of Joseph Hocking. A lot depends on the point of view. Mgr. Benson's qualities can scarcely appeal to such elements—a fact that is much in his favor. The security of his fame both as priest and as artist is in other keeping. His "judgment" needs no vindication with those who are acquainted with his life's work.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

IN POLAND GLOBE, Nov. 28

The situation seems to be as follows: When General Hindenburg's army re-entered Northern Poland in force, advancing along a front which extended from the Vistula to the Warta, the Russians were not expecting him from that direction. They believed that the attack would be made from the southwest, and their dispositions were made accordingly. The German plan seems to have been to employ a strong force on a demonstration from the front near Cracow which would hold the main Russian army there: to draw away the Russian forces in the centre with the object of checking and turning back General Hindenburg's army, and then to strike home upon the depleted Russian centre and smash it before the right wing in the north battling with Hindenburg, or the left wing engaged by the forces near Cracow, could come to the support of the centre.

The plan was an excellent one. Its failure was due to the too great rapidity of Von Hindenburg's movements, or the idleness of the army of the centre came to his support when it was discovered that the Russians were going to smash him. The news of the early part of the week chronicling a great Russian success had to do with the decisive defeat of the northern German army near Lovicz, and the cutting off of many thousands of General Hindenburg's men by the Russian strike on his right flank. While the Russians were pursuing the retreating Germanians the northern army, General Mackensen's army of the centre, starting from Weillum, on the Silesian frontier, east of Breslau, seems to have come up by forced marches to the rescue of Von Hindenburg's men and attacked Lodz. The reticence of the Russian official report seems to be due to the fact that while this army of the centre has been driven back by the Russians and has not been able to extricate Von Hindenburg's isolated corps, it has not yet been decisively defeated.

On the western front, as the French official statement puts it, "there is nothing to report." The Germans are still pouring in reinforcements, big guns, pontoons, and all sorts of war material. Soon there will be a good deal to report.

Before Parliament rose yesterday for a brief vacation Mr. Churchill told the members that there was no need to worry over the navy. Britain could afford to lose a super-Dreadnought every month for the next twelve months, and at the end of the period she would still be in a superior position to that occupied on the declaration of war. Up to the end of 1915 only three Dreadnoughts now in process of completion will be available as additions to Germany's strength, while in the same period Britain will add fifteen. Mr. Churchill also pointed out that Britain and Germany had lost an equal number of submarines since the war opened. Britain had lost no destroyers, while Germany had lost eight or ten. Britain had lost six of her older armored cruisers, while Germany had lost two. Britain had between three and four times as many as Ger-