

think, has counselled great prudence in broaching religion to strangers, lest they be repelled rather than attracted. I tried to be very careful, but I hungered for that soul, and prayed for it, and had the community pray also.

"Then you surely converted him?" I exclaimed. I was sure that anything that Dom Maurice prayed for would be granted.

"The first time I ventured to speak to him," the Benedictine continued, "he was seated on a bench just outside the town, near the wooded path that goes up to the lookout."

"The path that leads to the cliff?" I ventured. "The same," he answered. "I was taking a walk, and had almost passed him, when I heard a slight groan. I turned and saw him. He appeared to be in great pain, and I asked him if I could do anything for him."

"Thank you, sir—nothing," he answered. Then, noticing the casebook, he said somewhat ironically, "unless you are a physician."

"I am a physician of the soul," I replied. "Sometimes the trouble lies there."

He laughed at this, and then answered, "Thank you for your courtesy, mon pere, but I am not a believer in soul physicians. I am not aware that I am suffering from any malady of the soul."

In fact, I am not even sure that I possess a soul. If you were a physician of the body, I could avail myself of your services, for just at present I am painfully aware that I have a body."

"I began to speak to him of the soul, but he arose, politely bade me adieu, and started back to the town alone. I met him several times afterward, quite casually, but though he was uniformly courteous, he was very distant and I had no opportunity to speak to him."

One afternoon, just after Benediction, I tried to read a book which I was to review for the 'Analecta,' but I could not. I walked up and down the garden, terribly distracted. I felt that something was wrong, radically wrong, but I could not say what. I am not nervous, but I had a presentiment that something had happened, or was going to happen—something evil. The vision of the suffering man, whose name I did not even know, haunted me. I had seen despair grow, day by day, in his face. Of late he had not even looked up as I passed. The problem of his soul weighed on me. I cannot tell you how, but I was absolutely sure that something at that moment was happening to him—that he was passing through some tremendous soul crisis.

"I felt a distinct summons to action. I could almost hear his call for help. I had seen him go toward the wood path just before Benediction, and I resolved to follow him. So, putting the book aside, I took my hat and stick and went in that direction. I began to climb steadily and kept on until I came to the lookout."

"Sure enough, he was there, seated on the bench, staring blankly at the sun setting behind the mountains. He started—his face grew ghastly white when he saw me. He hit his lips and then he cried harshly: 'You of all men—and at this time! What are you doing here, you sneaking spy! Are you watching me?'"

Dom Maurice paused and mopped his brow. The day was cool, but perspiration covered his forehead. He had grown very excited.

"I never spoke to any man before as I did to him. I poured a flood of invective on him—God forgive me—that startled myself. 'You miserable man!' I cried. 'You coward! You self-murderer! Would you destroy the temple of God?'"

"He took a step toward the precipice, but I barred the way. He grappled with me and struggled desperately to pass. We both nearly toppled over the edge, but, thank God though I am old I am strong and vigorous, and he was weak. God's help, too, was with me. Finally, he desisted. He had fainted."

"I restored him, and then I persuaded him to return with me to the Abbey. He came meekly enough, his spirit of resistance was gone. I put him in care of the brother infirmarian, and he was very sick for several days. During that time he told me that he had gone to the precipice determined to hurl himself over into the depths below. He had gone to the very edge, but some irresistible force seemed to hold him back. Haunting memories of his boyhood days had flashed into his mind—his youthful companions, his prayers, his first Communion."

"He had looked over the brink of the precipice, and was measuring its depths, when in the darkness below he thought he saw his mother, her face sorrowful, and her arms raised beseechingly. The vision had unnerved him, and, trembling, he had returned to the bench to summon again his broken will to action. Waving aside the vision as mere imagination, he had almost resolved again to attempt self-destruction when I appeared."

"When I told him of how I had heard the summons in my garden and had gone straight to his help, he wept. 'O Gallieni,' he sobbed, 'Thou hast converted me!'"

"I do not know," answered the old priest simply, "but I had a presentiment of it from the first time I set eyes upon him. I knew that he was sent to me. It was all God's work—God's fiat, not mine—I was the mere instrument."

I thought again of Saint Philip Neri, and asked no more questions.—Rev. Joseph A. Murphy in Rosary Magazine.

THE BOGUS OATH AGAIN

ALBANY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FORCE WITHDRAWAL OF SLANDERS

More than one incident showing that the Catholic men of Albany are determined to enjoy every right guaranteed to them as citizens by the laws and constitution of the State and Nation has been recently noted. Within the past week another has been brought to light which proves the truth of the above statement and which shows, furthermore, that neither the Catholic Church, Catholic organizations nor individual Catholics can be calumniated with impunity.

The latest affair is one in which the members of that noble organization, the Knights of Columbus are most deeply interested, and the manner in which it has been handled, under the able leadership of Attorney James J. Nolan, master of the Fourth Degree Assembly, redounds to his credit and to the credit of the loyal and fearless brothers who co-operated with him in running down a calumniator of the glorious Catholic order and forcing a retraction of the calumnies.

Readers of this journal and of other Catholic publications are well aware that for some years past, in different sections of the country copies of an alleged oath, said to be taken by the Knights of Columbus, have been circulated, with the intention of making those into whose hands they fell believe that the Knights of Columbus are disloyal to their country and unfit to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship. It mattered not that the alleged oath was a malicious falsehood, that it was a calumny against the loyal and patriotic body of men as can be found under the Stars and Stripes; it served the hellish purpose of those unscrupulous bigots who will go to any length, stoop to any falsehood, violate Truth, Justice or Charity to gratify their senseless hatred of the Catholic Church and its members, and it was circulated first in one part of the country, then in another.

Thanks to the courage of the knights, the perpetrators of this calumny did not go unpunished. In more than one State of the Union they have been brought into court and forced to retract their slanders. The outbreak of the War and the glorious part taken by the Knights of Columbus in that great struggle for our country and for the cause of Freedom—a part which so long as the Stars and Stripes float will cause the name of the Knights of Columbus to be uttered with reverence and pride by every true, patriotic American—caused a cessation of the foul propaganda of these calumniators. They could not well disseminate their slanders while thousands of Knights of Columbus were dying in the shambles of France; while heroic K. of C. secretaries were facing poison gas, grenade and bursting shell to bring comforts and solace to our brave boys on those awful battle fields. They ran too great a risk of becoming the objects of summary vengeance on the part of indignant Americans who would stand for no calumniating of those heroes who were bleeding and dying, fighting and winning victories for our beloved country. In time of War Americans are not over scrupulous about executing summary vengeance upon the calumniators of their soldiers and defenders. Thus we heard but little of the circulation of the bogus K. of C. oath while the nation was engaged in that mighty life or death struggle. But with the return of peace, the calumniators could, they thought, resume their slanders, propaganda, and Albany happened to be one of the cities in which the discreditable work was started.

It became known to Albany Knights of Columbus that for the past month copies of the bogus oath have been mailed anonymously in sealed envelopes to persons in Albany. The matter was investigated by the Knights, through a committee of members, who ascertained that the slanderous circular was mailed by an Albany woman. One of the Albany ladies states that she is a woman prominent in club and suffrage activities. A further result of the work of the committee was that the woman, when confronted with the proof of being the one who sent out the circulars, admitted the truth of the charge in a sworn statement. She furthermore stated that she wished to make a retraction, as she is convinced that she committed a wrong in mailing the circular, and that there is no truth in the statements it contained. She furnished the committee the names of those to whom she had mailed a copy of the bogus oath. To these persons the committee of the Knights of Columbus sent a copy of her affidavit of retraction. The Knights also issued the following letter.

K. OF C. LETTER—FACTS IN THE CASE

"At intervals during the past several years the Order of the Knights of Columbus has been or originally libeled by some person or persons sending throughout the city of Albany by mail and otherwise a bogus oath said to be used in that order. During the past month a large number of these circulars were anonymously distributed in sealed envelopes. A committee of Albany assembly, Knights of Columbus, to whom the matter was referred thinking that the time had arrived when such a malicious and criminal practice should be stopped, secured positive evidence of the sending of this libelous matter by an Albany lady and she has since made an open admission to the committee that she had distributed the same through the mails."

"This committee after several conferences in which all the phases of the situation were carefully looked into, both criminal and otherwise, have decided to accept from this Albany lady and the said Albany lady has given a statement under oath in which she makes admission of such charges and now desires to retract the same convinced that she has committed a wrong in distributing the same and further stating that she is now convinced that there is no truth in such article."

"As a further consideration, this Albany lady has submitted to this committee a number of names to whom she admits having sent this libelous article to and whom we have sent a letter containing her affidavit of retraction."

"Knowing your interest in Knights of Columbus matters I am acquainting you with the above facts for such attention as you may deem the same warrant."

In so far as Albany is concerned, we will probably not again hear of the circulation of this bogus and slanderous oath. The prompt and commendable action of Albany Knights in running down the disseminator of the calumny will, undoubtedly, deter any bigot from attempting such work in this section. Unfortunately, however, we may expect that it will be attempted elsewhere. Like the old threadbare calumnies against the Church which are used again and again, despite their proved falsity, it will appear from time to time in other localities. This fact, though, will not detract from the credit due to the courageous and vigilant Knights of Columbus of Albany. Because of their manly warfare against calumny, every Catholic young man in Albany can hold his head higher and feel that while he will ever live in amity with men of every creed, respecting the rights of all his fellow Americans, ever striving and working for the welfare of our beloved country, ever laboring for the happiness of Jew and Gentile, of Protestant or Catholic, he will be as quick to hunt down calumniators of his Church, his society and his fellow Catholic as have been the Chivalrous Knights of Columbus in this instance. There is an added lustre on the emblem of Albany Council No. 173 which will never grow dim.

We should state that Mr. Nolan had brought the matter to the attention of the prosecuting officer of the country, but did not wish to prosecute the woman unless she refused to make an affidavit retracting the accusations contained in the pamphlet. On her expressing a willingness to make such a sworn retraction, the proceedings were dropped.—Syracuse Catholic Sun.

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ASCENDANCY OF LUCK

The soldier likes a mascot. He wants a charm against ill fortune. This is instead of a religion. Superstition comes up as religion goes down. Providence disappears, and chance has sway. The god of good luck comes into his own. The placing of fate or the tricking of it takes the place of the law of God. It is a hard gospel, as old as the world. And paganism dies hard. Somehow or other it is in the blood of humanity. And yet it may not be wholly evil. At worst it is a confession that there is a power greater than man, and that this power can be approached and placated. At best, it means complete accord with that Power, which is God. And it is a confession that man cannot stand alone in the battle of life. It is a right instinct with a bad outlet. The instinct receives its recognition in the Catholic faith. Intercession of the Saints, prayers for the dead, here is exercise for the unseen and the supernatural. The sacramental objective in their reality, the rosary, the scapular, the medal, the crucifix, are the legitimate outlets that supplant the mascot and lead men to God. To the outsider they may seem to possess too much value for the Catholic, but their test is the faith and hope and love that they bring to the heart of man. Every chaplain will testify to their worth. "Hast a wee Christ for me?" was the request of a dying Scotsman to a Catholic chaplain. There may have been weird and fantastic uses of charms and mascots under the terrible ordeal of War, but there was also a tremendous growth in the demand for Catholic objects of devotion. Protestantism had nothing to give to the soldier, and in so far as he had to minister to the boys under him the Protestant chaplain was sadly and desperately handicapped. Confessions only too frankly made are the sad commentary of the failure of Protestantism in War to understand the human heart. Mascots with those outside the Church took the place of beads and crucifixes. And again in a crisis our Mother is justified of her own children.—New World.

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