

our epoch, with their pilgrimages, their missions and their propaganda work. Father Pernet, a disciple of Father d'Alzon, the founder of the Order, labored among the poor and his devotion to them inspired him with the desire to win them through kindness. He had dreamed of a congregation of nuns who would work among the poor, taking the place of the mother of the house when she was sick or absent. He had found two young girls of the working classes to carry out his plan, but only one of them was willing to persevere, and the other was not capable of directing the new Order. With the second sight of the saints, Father Pernet judged that Antoinette Fage had the necessary qualities, and he therefore called her. At the first invitation the humble working girl, who had become the directress of the orphanage, protested, believing that to nurse the sick and take charge of other nuns was not at all her vocation. The Assumptionist insisted, and Antoinette finally consented, as a matter of obedience.

This was in 1864. Ten years later the Sisters of the Assumption established in the labor quarters of Grenelle, with branches in the Batignolles district, at Saint-Roch and in the labor faubourg of Levallois-Perret, received the official approval of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. In 1888, Antoinette Fage, who had become Mother Mary of Jesus, died in odor of sanctity, surrounded by her daughters. The Order then had new houses at Belleville, in the heart of the revolutionary center, at Sevres and Creil, in the suburbs of Paris, and in one of the thickly populated suburbs of London. In 1901 the Order received the approval of Rome. At that time the sisters numbered 400, and this figure has increased remarkably in the past twenty years. Today the Order is established not only in various parts of France and England, but in Italy, Belgium, Ireland, the United States and the Argentine Republic.

The chief characteristic of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and the one which has made them so popular, is their admirable disinterestedness in the service of the poor. They take their places at the bedside of sick and unfortunate workmen, and not content with acting as nurse, they take charge of the household, going to market, preparing and serving the meals, cleaning the house and caring for the children. Two strict rules, to which no exception has ever been made, govern their activity; they serve only the needy poor, and from the poor they accept nothing, not even a glass of water.

These little servants of the poor were founded by a humble working girl. Today, many women of noble race and great fortune serve among them, all hidden under the uniform veil.

ASSISTED BY "LADY SERVANTS"

Without preaching except by example and devotion, these modest and alert little "swallows" do wonders. When they presented their Constitution to Rome in 1897, they could already report 10,000 marriages rehabilitated, 800 abortions, 1,000 baptisms of adults, and 5,000 First Communions. These figures have been more than doubled since then. Three lay societies have been established in connection with the Order, the "Dames Servantes" or Lady Servants, who assist them in caring for the poor, and who provide relief or do other work which the Sisters cannot do; the "Fraternities" or groups of men, several thousand in number, who have been converted or strengthened in the Faith through the efforts of the Sisters, and a confraternity of mothers called the "Daughters of Saint Monica."

A few months ago the Superior General of the Society died. Her funeral assumed the character of an occasion for national grief. Huge crowds of working men, voluntarily giving up half a day's pay, escorted the coffin of the "little sister" through the streets of Paris, and mingled with many notables of the political world, such as M. Duval-Arnauld, deputy and Chairman of the Labor Committee of the Chamber; M. Louis Dubois, a former cabinet minister and now Chairman of the Reparations Committee, both of whom are "decurions" of the Fraternities in the Assumption, and who consider it an honor to be servants of these little servants of the poor.

#### A COURSE OF ETHICS FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Exclusion of training in ethics from the Public schools is deplored by Dr. Charles W. Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University, in the course of an article entitled "An Essay on American Democracy" which appears in the latest number of the New York Times Current History.

Dr. Eliot points out the need of educational reform and indicates several improvements which he declares are in the minds of thinking people. He writes:

"Doubtless the most important of all these improvements in the Public schools is the introduction of the instruction in the principles and aims of universal ethics. The present exclusion of training in ethics from all Public schools is one of the most unfortunate results of the toleration in religion which was embodied in the Constitution of the United States

and of the multiplicity of religions and Christian sects strongly represented in the American Commonwealth. A feasible mode of giving instruction in universal ethics in the free school is yet to be invented.

"Several experiments on this subject are already being tried; but none of them seems promising, and particularly none of them is likely to take any effect on that large proportion of the American population which remains unchurched. The problem is to select a body of material for ethical instruction which Roman Catholics, the various Protestant denominations and the Jews can agree upon for use in the schools, this material to include selections from the Scriptures, stories, fables, hymns and other poetry, drama and music.

"Self-appointed committees in various parts of the country are already at work on this problem; and there is no better field for philanthropic and patriotic endeavor."

#### FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND MISSION ORDERS

##### REC'GNIZES VALUE OF THEIR WORK IN FOREIGN FIELDS

By M. Masland  
Paris Correspondent, N. C. W. C.

As announced in a recent cable to the N. C. W. C. News Service, the French Government has submitted to Parliament bills authorizing the legal existence in France of four religious orders:

1. The Society of African Missions of Lyons.
2. The Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers).
3. The Congregation of French Franciscans for Foreign Missions.
4. The Society of Missionaries of the Levant.

The text of these bills has just been handed to the deputies of the Chamber. The bills are signed by the President of the Republic, M. Poincaré, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and M. Manoury, Minister of the Interior.

##### PROVISION FOR AFRICAN MISSIONS

The bill dealing with the Society of African Missions of Lyons states that: "The services rendered by this Society have long been appreciated by the Government, which at one time employed its missionaries in the course of some delicate negotiations with Behanzin and the King of Porto-Novo, and which views with favor the development of its establishments and works."

The African Missions have establishments in the United States, among the colored people of the States of New Jersey, Georgia and Louisiana. In Africa they have 810 priests and 35 coadjutors, and occupy eleven vicariats or prefectures apostolic in Dahomey, Togo, Nigeria and Egypt.

The request for authorization presented by them to the Government calls for twelve establishments: a great seminary at Lyons, a country house attached to this seminary to permit the future missionaries to acquire physical strength, four apostolic schools, a training school for lay assistants where postulants may learn agriculture and gardening, a sanatorium, a retreat house, and three offices at Marseilles, Paris and Luveing.

As for the Society of Missionaries of Africa, known as the White Fathers, the bill recalls the fact that this society, which was founded by Cardinal Lavigerie, renders admirable services to French expansion in Northern and Central Africa and in Syria.

At the present time the White Fathers occupy 133 stations, with 425 missionaries, throughout Northern Africa, in the Sudan and even in Uganda.

The Government also recalls the fact that it has entrusted to this Order the guardianship of the Basilica of Saint Anne, at Jerusalem which is the property of the French State, and of the seminary for the Greek Melchites which is attached to this basilica.

The White Fathers have requested legal authorization for twenty-six establishments: their headquarters at Maison-Carree, near Algiers; a novitiate, a hospital, a sanatorium and seventeen establishments of various kinds in Algeria; three apostolic schools in France, an office in Paris and an office in Marseilles.

##### GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN FRANCISCANS' WORK

Concerning the Franciscans, the bill says: "The Government is interested in the maintenance and prosperity of their Missions in Morocco, in the Orient, in China and Japan, and believes it advisable to grant authorization for the twelve establishments requested by them as a basis for their foreign missions."

After pointing out that the request of the Franciscans has been given the warmest approval by Marshal Lyautey, who appreciates particularly the services rendered by them in Morocco, the Government proposes that the Order be permitted to open twelve establishments in France; a headquarters in Paris, two maritime offices, one in Marseilles and the other in Bordeaux, nine juvenates, and scholasticates, to some of which houses for retired missionaries will be attached.

The Franciscans intend to bring back to France the French novices who are still living abroad, notably at Fribourg, Switzerland. They also hope to accommodate in their

houses in Paris and other university centers foreign religious who desire to follow the courses of the colleges and institutions for higher study.

A few members of the former order of Friars Minor, or Capuchins, have requested legal authorization to establish in Lyons a new order to be known as the Society of Missionaries of the Levant, the object of which will be to supply the needs of the missions formerly assigned to the French Capuchins of Constantinople, in Syria, Mesopotamia, Abyssinia, the British East Indies, Seychelle Islands, Canada and Brazil, as well as those missions which may be entrusted to them in the future.

The French Capuchins occupy 65 residences abroad, serving 186 churches and chapels. They direct 4 seminaries, 9 colleges, 28 schools, 63 orphanages, 10 hospitals, 1 leprosarium, 10 dispensaries. Their influence reaches a Catholic population of over 500,000 souls in the midst of a pagan population of more than 13 million souls.

##### PLEASE FOR LEVANT MISSIONARIES

"It cannot be denied," the bill states, "that these missions help not only to extend the use of our language, but to win for us numerous and faithful sympathies."

"The Government of the Republic has never failed to grant subsidies to the Capuchins for their work in foreign lands."

"France can never forget that she has reaped, particularly during the War, the harvest of so much activity and so much devotion. The missionaries of the Levant will be valuable auxiliaries in the development of our influence abroad, and it is therefore advisable to facilitate their task by granting them the means of training their recruits in France under the conditions provided by our legislation."

The Levant Missionaries will be authorized to maintain in France their headquarters, a novitiate and a general office at Lyons, a general office at Marseilles, 18 novitiates, scholasticates and houses for retired missionaries in various parts of the country.

Before being submitted to the Chamber for approval at a plenary session, the four bills will be examined by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, by which it is practically certain that it will be given favorable consideration.

#### CARDINAL O'CONNELL

##### DEPLORES SPIRIT OF EXTRAVAGANCE

His Eminence, the Cardinal, addressing the members of the Guild of the Infant Saviour spoke in part as follows:

The idea that has sprung up in the New World of drawing a fine line of demarcation between the residential districts of the wealthy and the slums of the poor is unworthy of the Christian Catholic ideal. It gives a cold statistical outlook to the wealthy, and certainly does not draw the hearts of the poor nearer to the longed for approach in love and mutual confidence. Europe presents a more evenly balanced picture, because the rich and poor give shoulder to shoulder. Thus the social problems of the wage earner are constantly in the eye of the upper classes and in the solution of these problems come about more expeditiously, from the spirit of understanding which exists between the classes and the masses.

This aloofness which exists between the rich and poor in this country, through complete segregation of each in its respective domain, has given rise to the erroneous idea among the poorer classes that capitalists are hard hearted. Yet the capitalist is a generous minded man, if properly approached for aid and if the situation is explained. The American capitalist is among the most tender hearted of men. It is wrong to represent him as being otherwise.

There is and has been evidenced, however, over the length and breadth of the world a recklessness to which I wish to refer on this occasion. It is found among all classes, both rich and poor, and calls for effective remedy.

There is a widespread wave of squandering, of extravagance, of reckless living. Our own beloved country has not escaped it. Parents should be the first to give good example in the matter of thrift founded on honest industry, and the last to set an example for the growing youth of prodigal and foolish expenditure. Such a course of proper direction both in the matter of individual thrift and public conservation will stem an evil that today is threatening not only the economic but social well being of the nation.

Visualize, for example, the appalling disaster of Russia. Before the revolution, there was a long continued nightmare of debauchery, of extravagance. Christian charity toward the poor was practically unknown. We must not be surprised that such conditions have brought about war and suffering, such as the world has not witnessed before.

Discontent among the working classes will grow greater in the hardships they are called upon to bear, if the wealthy continue to spend recklessly before the eyes of the workers. Things might come to such a pass in this country as they did in Russia, when the people rose in revolt against the excesses and debauchery of the rich.

Establishing Christian charity in the home, inculcating it in the hearts of the children, will curb the present day tendency to riotous living, and absolute waste of money on frivolities of dress and amusement.

Going through the gestures of religion and being affiliated with numerous guilds, societies or clubs will never amount to anything in the life of anyone, unless the person so situated has alive in her heart the fire of divine charity.

#### HISTORIC FACTS OF WOESTE'S LIFE

##### A BELGIAN STATESMAN'S STRUGGLE FOR FAITH

The papers publish some letters of the deceased Carlo Woeste, Minister of State, in Belgium, written when he was only sixteen or seventeen years old. These are of great interest because they treat of his conversion to Catholicity and of the bitter struggle he had to sustain the respect of his relatives; disclosing the financial order and the moral order which oppose themselves to the choice of his state, and showing especially the firm purpose, the conviction and the noble carrying out throughout his entire long political career, of working for Jesus Christ and His Church.

Treating of this eminent personage, who was for a long time the head of the Catholic party and the most forceful defender of the rights of the Church in Parliament, these letters of his youth have produced here great edification.

The letters are addressed to a friend of childhood, in a religious sentiment from which Woeste found the consolation and which he had lost from his own family.

The religious of whom he often spoke in his letters was P. Deleourt, whose picture Woeste had always before him on his work table.

##### WOESTE'S LETTERS

Carlo Woeste wrote at the time of his conversion:

"All is ended, my good E—I am a Catholic! Oh, how sweet this word is for my conversion! How many things it signifies; the most consoling and most reasonable dogmas, the practices and duties dearest to finish, the most efficacious remedies to the soul. Oh, how good is the Saviour to have shown me the light, to have chosen me among so many heretics and blind men, to have given me entrance, notwithstanding the grave obstacles, into the true Church. This man compassionately took me by the hand, dispelling my errors, fears he solicited from me all confidence in him and he never deluded me; he told me to leave all with him, and the consoling thought sustained me many months; shunned by so many people, he told me to seek refuge with him, to always hope for the good; it was for my spiritual fortune, and in moments of discouragement, it sustained me, and instilled more deeply greater courage. Finally, the great day was coming near, and long from letting myself be downcast, I always aspired greatly to become a Catholic; the vigil had prepared me, and I hoped that God had blessed my efforts to merit His grace and to receive it worthily.

"Yesterday, towards 11, I took a little nutrition to be able easily to abstain the following day."

"God did not permit that everyday fears should assail me.

"My father arose late, and as he was not present at breakfast, I was able to fast easily; later, he went out toward 9:30 and did not know at all that I had gone out. I went to the convent at 10; I found the good priest, and the ceremony commenced a short time after; functioning as god-father was a lay professor of the College. I believe it to be useless to describe all the ceremony by which I became a child of God and of the Church; anyway, if you so wish it, I will narrate a little. After the baptism, I went into the chapel where I received Jesus; there was no Mass. It is superfluous, dear E—to describe my joy and my happiness.

"I found indeed in the end, the father, an excellent guide and tolerant. He showed me a tenderness which cannot be found but among the priests. My gratitude will be eternal, and for reward, I made him my confessor.

"And also for you, dear E—my gratitude is so great that I can never repay you; you co-operated to sustain me with your good advice, you made the first step easy when I went to find the priest, and then your prayers called forth the benediction of God on me. All that I can give today is a living friendship and a limitless devotion. It is a sad thing that we must be held apart for some time, but that is no reason to silence our reciprocal sentiments, but will be the contrary."

##### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Carlo Woeste encountered grave difficulties with his family by complying with his new religious duties. In speaking of the opposition of his father, he wrote:

"It was a year ago Christmas day, dear E—that my father found the letter of M. V., an event very terrible in the first moment, but which brought me happiness in my conversion; a year after, more or less, happened another very fatal event. I arose from Communion; thoughtfully I mounted the stairs, when unexpectedly father came out of a

room on the first floor; there was no use of avoiding him. He saw me and asked suddenly: 'Where have you been?' Reticient, astonished, not knowing what to reply, I said, 'I have been to see how the weather is.' 'You do not say the truth,' he replied. 'Very well,' I added, 'I have been to see the illumination in church; does that displease you?' He did not answer me.

"He had scarcely ascended, with grief in his heart, when he called me and questioned me with forcible words in the following way: 'I am not inclined your way; think of what you do; you are the sorrow of your father, of your mother and of your sister; I made a vow at the time of your baptism to bring you up in the Protestant religion, and will keep it, even to the hour of your emancipation; think well of what you do, and he left me with these good words.'

"Here then, good E—this is what happened. If there is anything which you can reply to the impression which this sad event has produced on me, it is only the sorrow to have lived such a short time after having received Our Saviour; but God is merciful and I hope will pardon me."

"Tell me, E—what you would do in my position? think of my situation? There are times in which man is not himself, when turbulence pervades his heart. Once again, am I capable as I am reputed? Tomorrow or the day after, I shall go to the priest; ask this best friend who represents my fortune, his advice and seek his comforting counsels."

"I accept with joy the new proof which the Saviour has sent me, and only deplore that through my fault a fault happened; I accept it and await patiently the day when, God permitting, I will seek to consecrate myself to Him for the rest of my days. I shall remain Catholic, no matter what comes and I shall pray so much to Our Lord to allow me the grace of perseverance, with greater fervor to go on to the end. If there is one thing which preoccupies and disturbs me, it is the fear to see my father spying on me, and of being impeded in complying with these religious practices, so sweet and so consoling in the Catholic religion. What do you think? Jesus Christ who through His goodness has called me to the Catholic faith, will not refuse me the grace of practising it, through my and your prayers. Confiding in Him and hoping in Him, I place myself in His hands and repeat endlessly; 'God is always my custodian.'"

"I will admit, I was imprudent, I was wrong to hear three Masses in the morning; but after the month of August, I shall go to Communion once a month, without father knowing it and permit me, dear E—to ask once again: Pray for me."

#### NUN DESCRIBES FIGHT TO AID POOR

Various groups of Irish women are playing an increasingly important part in the development of the nation and not the least among them are the communities of Irish religious, who as in the days of St. Brid, are intellectual as well as spiritual leaders of their people.

The difficulties against which these consecrated women are often forced to strive, are well illustrated in the work that is being attempted by the Sisters of Mercy of St. Edna's Convent at Spiddal in County Galway, which is in the united diocese of Galway and Kilmaedagh.

The convent is situated in a corner of the world where Gaelic traditions are still strongest, where there is still preserved the primitive less tradition of the Gaelic tongue and where the people, though of the poorest, rank with the hand-somest in physique and the most courtly in manner, of all Ireland.

"Such hard work it is for mere existence among the rocks and stones," writes Sister Mary Magdalene, the superior, in describing the work the nuns are endeavoring to do. "The people are a fine hard-working people, but there are no industries, not even a glove factory and the land cannot be called real land. The sea is near but there are no boats. One man possesses a little galley and he goes out to fish on fine evenings. Gathering turf is the nearest approach to an industry and some years they get good prices for it. But this year times have been so hard.

"Our sisters came here ten years ago at the invitation of the parish priest. He had hoped that the sisters could start some work to help the girls of the district, and they in turn would help conditions in the little cabin homes. We have tried very hard, but we are always handicapped for lack of something with which to start. We are anxious to build and have rooms where the girls could be taught knitting—a place where we could possibly develop a small factory for jerseys, scarfs and other things, and from which our girls could derive a little income."

After years of striving Sister Magdalene, despite disappointment, still has hopes of success for her work. The history of her efforts is the history of many similar communities of Irish nuns, which, while molding the spiritual ideals for the Irish children are constantly striving to better material conditions;—often in parts of the land where even nature seems to conspire against the people.



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