

PAPER SIR?

Every morning as Francis Montgomery passed the corner of Mohawk and Fourteenth streets a little girl clad in rags said to him, extending a newspaper in a thin little hand, "Paper, Sir?" For two years on each work day morning the child was there at her post until Montgomery began to consider her a part of the busy street and noticed her more each time. At last, one morning as he went by, the little news girl was not there and the cold business man felt as if something were lacking from his usual program, as if some light in his life had failed to shine that day. He missed the pretty picture she made as she stood there with her dark auburn curls flying in the wind. She was very small and thin and the dark eyes seemed all the darker and bigger on account of the extreme pallor of her skin. Constantly throughout the day these words were in his mind. Then he would find himself thinking of her. Where was she? Was the child ill? Why was she not there? If he only knew where she lived he would go to see her, he thought. But the sharp ring of the telephone suddenly interrupted his thoughts and, taking up the receiver, he wearily answered, "Hello!" "Hello," came a man's voice over the wire. "This is John Harrison; say Frank, you're a lawyer, will you come over to the court house with me today?" "What for," queried Montgomery. "Well, I've got a case on and I'd like to have you there, Frank. That's all. Will you come?" "Yes, at what time?" asked Montgomery. "Oh, about 2 o'clock, thanks; good-by." "Good-by," said the other man slowly. Then he glanced at his watch and found that it was just 1:30, so he settled down to work for a half hour. But at 2 o'clock prompt he met John Harrison and the latter's wife at the court house. They went in. Harrison's case came first and Montgomery looked for the defendant. The door opened and in walked a little girl. To his astonishment it was none other than the little news-girl. Montgomery experienced a strange feeling coming over him and said weakly to Mrs. Harrison, "Jane," for he knew her very well, "is that child the defendant?" Jane Harrison nodded assent. "Do you mean to say John is going to prosecute that baby?" "Why, certainly, Mr. Montgomery, why not?" said Jane, she stole at least ten dollars' worth of groceries from John's store last night and you know she will end in the electric chair if that is not stopped now. It is for her own well being, I think; but before she had time to finish, Francis Montgomery had risen from his seat and was racing up the aisle toward the judge. "Harrison! Harrison!" he cried, "don't do anything to her, I'll bail her out. Don't send her to jail!" The entire room turned its eyes toward him. The little prisoner's tear-stained face was looking beseechingly toward him. John Harrison turned around saying with a sneer: "Well, Frank, I never saw you so excited, he said."

"I dunno where," replied the lad. "Well, mister, you'll wait for her, won't you?" said his sister to Montgomery. "Why, certainly, child," he answered, "but first let us have supper." The little girl helped him to set out the table and he and his sister sat at the table and the child was eating as fast as they could. Montgomery sat watching the busy little diners when the door opened and in came a tall, gaunt-looking woman. "Mamma," cried the children crowding around her, "look what the nice man got us." "Not seeing Montgomery she queried, "What nice man? Whom do you mean?" "Why him, mamma!" said the children pointing to Montgomery. "The man turned her eyes toward him and immediately a look of alarm and surprise overspread her face. "What—what are you here?" she exclaimed. How—how, Oh, why did you come?" she stammered. The man was equally affected. "Why—my—Oh, Meg, Oh, it is terrible that," he stammered. "Yes, it is terrible that we should meet under such circumstances," she interrupted, growing calmer. Suddenly the man dashed forward and throwing himself on his knees before the woman he cried, "Meg, Meg, dear, my daughter, can't you forgive me now? Won't you give me a chance to redeem my former unkindness to you?" Then his voice broke and tears filled his eyes. Margaret looked at him for a few seconds with a sad, pensive look, but then she threw her arms about his neck, sank to the floor and wept on the old man's shoulder. "Daddy," she whispered, "you must forgive me—my willfulness. Let us forget and forgive now, dad, we were both wrong." "Yes, my daughter," said Montgomery, "but let's forget it now. From now on all will be as well for you as I can make it." Father and daughter sat for many minutes in each other's embrace, regardless of the dirty floor or anything else while the children gazed with wondering eyes. Finally they arose and Margaret said to her children, "Darlings, this is grandpa. Come, you must kiss him. Immediately the children crowded about him lovingly, while Margaret watched with beaming eyes. Especially the little girl clung to him. "Meg," said her father, "tell me their names. You mustn't forget that I am a stranger." "This one," said his daughter, placing her hand on the little girl's head, "is little Genevieve, Jenny I call her, and that one is James or Jimmie. Then that's Francis or Frank and the smallest one is Alfie or Freddy." The old man laughed. "The three gentlemen are strangers, but Jenny and I are old friends, aren't we?" "Oh, yes, grandpa, dear," said Jenny. "How glad I used to be when you'd give me extra pennies when you'd buy my paper. Oh, but, grandpa, I'm so glad you are grandpa." Everyone laughed. At last the old man said, looking at his watch, "Well, well, it's getting late. We must be getting home. Come along the car is outside." The children followed him, but Meg stayed to gather up a few trinkets. But soon she appeared, got into the auto and in a short time they had left the slums far behind and had arrived at Montgomery's beautiful mansion on Wabash avenue. "This is your home, kiddies," said the old man as he led the way into the house. They all followed, admiring and wondering at their new home. The servant who opened the door stared in amazement at the crowd, but soon the old housekeeper told her that was old Montgomery's daughter Margaret and her children who had come.

"When Meg was eighteen," she told the maid, "she married a young Catholic and became one herself. The old man not only loved because she married beneath her, but because she married a Papist, as he called his son-in-law. Of course he disapproved her and poor Meg and young Esmond went to live elsewhere. That's the last we ever heard of her. We thought maybe she was dead. I think old Montgomery regretted what he had done, 'cause he was always and after Meg went, but now, seeing she's come back, the old house will be bright and happy again I know." Then she hastened away to see the children and their mother. Meg and her children lived happily with old Montgomery, but their material joy was greatly augmented by a spiritual event. On Christmas eve, as they were all gathered about the Christmas tree, little Jenny said slowly, "We must all go to Mass tomorrow and thank the Christ-Child for being good to us." "Yes, dear, we will," said her mother. "Then, said the little girl again, "Grandpa, won't you come with us to Mass and receive Communion with mamma and me?" A look of alarm crossed Mrs. Esmond's face, but it was almost instantly replaced by one of joy by the old man's answer. "Sure little Jenny, I'll come to Mass," he replied, "and I'll receive my first holy Communion with you, too." "You receive Communion? Oh, grandpa, you're not—Oh, are you a Catholic, grandpa?" Margaret listened, breathless with excitement.

"Yes, my child," he said, "I was baptized this morning and tomorrow I'll make my first Communion." Meg and the children rained kisses and tears of joy upon him. Then they sat there for a long time in silent happiness before the fire. Finally, Jenny said, "Grandpa, I used to get tired saying 'Paper, Sir,' but if I'd never said it, I'd never known you or had you for my grandpa or, most of all, you'd probably never become a Catholic." "I know, dear, I wouldn't. It was your 'Paper, Sir,' that was the means of bringing me at last to you and the true faith," he answered, drawing her nearer to him.—D. L.

chimney to keep myself from freezing, and I fell down. I am only a little sweep, Jean Chanterosse." "But why were you on the roof at this late hour?" asked Madame Guillemain, whose heart was beginning to soften at the predicament of the poor boy. "Madame," he answered, "I was waiting for the Infant Jesus to come. I am an orphan and I am unhappy; so I wanted to ask Him to make less winter less cold, and my life less poor and hard. You won't beat me, will you?" he implored, turning to the angry father. "Please don't punish the little sweep," said Madame Guillemain, from her bed. "It must have been very cold out on the roof and so dark in the chimney." "Do not fear, my son," replied Monsieur Guillemain, "I'll do nothing harsh." He then spoke with his wife for a few moments in a low voice. They were a pious and charitable couple as well as rich. Four of their children had died and Mrs. alone was left. The heart was bound up in him, but he was frail and delicate. "Perhaps," suggested Madame Guillemain timidly to her husband, "it may draw down God's blessing on Marc if we keep this poor little stranger with us." "Your thought is mine, wife; that is what we will do," replied the husband. Then turning to the little sweep he added: "Your parents are dead and you have no home? I suppose you would like to remain with us?" Jean Chanterosse gazed at his benefactor in amazement. He was so surprised and so grateful that he was almost dumbfounded. His beautiful brown eyes grew larger and more lustrous with surprise and happiness. He was simply overwhelmed at the kind proposal. Not waiting for an answer, Monsieur Guillemain continued: "It is settled, Jean; you are to live with us." The faithful maid, Marc's old nurse, was then summoned at once and the little stranger was given in her charge with directions that he be given a bath and then clothed in some of her young master's garments. In less than an hour the good woman had simply transformed the little sweep, and he appeared a pleasing, charming looking boy. Only a few days were needed to make him quite at home and happy with the Guillemains. He began to take lessons with the family tutor and made rapid progress in his studies. Besides, the advantage of the companionship improved Marc's health, and a warm affection soon sprang up between the two children which continued from childhood to youth. And thus the years passed until there came at last the serious question for the two friends, choosing a career. For Jean Chanterosse it was the priesthood; he had heard the Silent Voice and the call was clear and distinct. Marc Guillemain did not aspire so high; he chose to save his soul in the world. The parting came when the former entered the diocesan seminary, and his friend started for the military school of Saint-Cyr.

When the Franco-Prussian War broke in 1870, Marc Guillemain was a colonel in the army and attached to a regiment near the German frontier, while the Abbé Chanterosse, who had been ordained a couple of years previously, was laboring for souls in the hilly districts of northern France. At the outbreak of hostilities the zealous priest volunteered as military chaplain and was now with his regiment in the very midst of the Vosges campaign. The War was raging in its full intensity. For a whole week both armies were locked in a struggle which relaxed only for a moment on Christmas eve. A violent snow storm had swept the battlefield during the preceding day, but a soft wind had followed quickly and had melted it away. News came to the ambulance camp that a skirmish had taken place in the neighborhood, and at dusk the chaplain accompanied by four brave stretcher-bearers, carrying lanterns, went out across the narrow valley to the edge of the battlefield. The ground was soft and boggy, mud clung to their boots, and their progress was slow, but they pushed on to the opposite side, peering closely along the ground for casualties. Suddenly the moans of a poor wounded sufferer reached their ears and they perceived a man lying close to the wall of the cemetery. A moment later the chaplain was kneeling over him, not knowing whether he was French or German. In the dim light of the lanterns blood and mud had made him unrecognizable, but his voice seemed familiar, and the joy of the chaplain may be guessed at when, under the grime and dust of battle, he recognized his old friend, Marc Guillemain, badly battered by the enemy's shells, but still alive. The Abbé Chanterosse did all he could to revive the unfortunate officer; he administered first aid and succeeded in restoring him; but it was some time before the wounded man was sufficiently recovered to recognize the one who was befriending him. When he did he was deeply moved. The stretcher bearers raised him tenderly, and carried him to the nearest ambulance where the surgeon promptly attended to his wounds and declared that there was hope of his recovery. The precious hours were flitting away; it was nearly midnight. Christmas had always tender memories for the young military chaplain, and he had arranged to celebrate in the ruins of an ancient church close to the ambulance station. The Mass was served by an old soldier who had been an altar-boy in years gone by, and the ceremony was as simple and as impressive as were the Masses celebrated in the catacombs in the early ages of the Church; it was made more impressive by the presence of the wounded officer, whose cot had been placed near the altar-rail. Meanwhile a rapid improvement set in in the condition of Colonel Marc Guillemain. In a very few weeks he was strong enough to return to Paris, where his arrival was greeted by his parents with great joy and thanksgiving, not merely because he had survived his wounds, but also because he had returned to them wearing the Cross of the Legion of Honor. But greater was the happiness of the aged couple when their soldier son told them how he had met Jean Chanterosse, the military chaplain, after the battle, and the latter's services to him. "Jean has saved our son," the mother softly whispered; "our kindness to the little orphan eighteen years ago was not done in vain. I knew well that through him God would bless and protect our child."—F. D., in the Sacred Heart Messenger.

A WAR EPISODE OF 1870

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MODERN CAPITALISM

Written for "Reconstruction Magazine" by the Rev. John A. Ryan, D. D., of the Catholic University of America.

No other pronouncement ever made by a religious body in the United States has aroused as much interest as that entitled "Social Reconstruction: A General Review of the Problems and Survey of Remedies," issued February 12, by the four bishops who constitute the administrative committee of the National Catholic War Council. The press of the country, both secular and religious, has given the program a generous measure of publicity and editorial comment, and individuals from every social class have recognized it as a document of unusual significance. The program contains two main parts, the first presenting a short sketch of the principal reconstruction proposals previously issued by various agencies in Great Britain and the United States, while the second sets forth the council's own recommendations. At the beginning of the second part the bishops disclaim any intention to formulate a comprehensive scheme of reconstruction. They restrict themselves to a consideration of those reforms that seem to be both desirable and attainable within a reasonable time, and to "a few general principles which may become a guide to more distant developments." LANE PLAN ENDORSED First among the particular reforms come those that were either put into operation during the War, or that relate immediately to problems created by the War. The industrial replacement of soldiers and sailors is put down as the first of these problems. One of the ways recommended to meet it is the plan of Secretary Lane for placing the returning men on farms. The benefits of a properly organized colonization enterprise would be seen not only in the employment furnished the men themselves, but in the increase of farm owners and independent farmers, and in the tendency to lower food costs. The United States employment service and the national war labor board, which have done a vast amount of good work in connecting men with jobs, and in adjusting labor disputes, should be improved and continued, since both are sadly needed in the time of peace. The experience in public housing obtained during the War should likewise be utilized by those cities that are confronted with congestion and the other evils resulting from insufficient and disreputable provisions for sheltering the working classes. Unfortunately for the bishops' recommendations on these four subjects the first three of them have, at least temporarily, been disregarded by the responsible authorities. Congress failed to make adequate provisions for carrying out Secretary Lane's colonization scheme, did nothing to strengthen and make permanent the war labor board, and deliberately refused to appropriate funds for the maintenance of the national employment service. In the case of these three supremely practical and urgent measures for industrial and social welfare, the Church has shown itself more alive, more solicitous and more realistic than the State. Whether the municipalities will within a reasonable time take up the problem of housing, remains in the realm of prophecy. Another War-time condition considered by the bishops is the presence of great numbers of women in what had been formerly men's occupations. These women "should not be compelled to suffer any greater loss or inconvenience than is absolutely necessary" in yielding back these positions to the returning soldiers and sailors. Three general principles are laid down: First, no female worker should "continue in any occupation that is harmful to health or morals"; second, "women should receive the same pay as men for the same work"; and third, "the

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