

The Catholic Record

Price of Subscription—\$1.50 per annum. United States & Europe—\$2.00. Publisher and Proprietor, Thomas Coffey, L.L.D. Editors: Rev. James T. Foley, R. A. Thomas Coffey, L.L.D.

Advertisements for teachers, situations wanted, etc., 50 cents each insertion. Remittance to accompany the order. Approved and recommended by Archbishops Falco and Sheehy, late Apostolic Delegates to Canada, the Archbishops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and St. Boniface, the Bishops of London, Hamilton, Peterborough, and Oshawa, N. Y., and the clergy throughout the Dominion.

LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1916

"HALT! WHO GOES THERE?"

Of the making of War-books there is no end. That, of course, is true of other books as well. Still there are always books worth reading; some, even about the War, are worth buying. A book is hardly worth reading if it is not worth reading twice. A book is not worth buying if it is not worth reading many times; if you may not go to it and find a page, a chapter that will inspire, console, stimulate, contradict; if, in short, it does not give out to the atmosphere of mind and heart that surrounds the living friend.

"Halt! Who Goes There?" is a war-book as its very martial title quite shamelessly proclaims. Yet if you gloat over the gruesome details of the carnage of the modern battlefield do not buy it. If you would gratify and justify your hatred of the "Huns"—not a soldier's vice but characteristic of the stay-at-homes—do not read it.

But if you are sore of heart and afflicted in spirit over the War, oppressed by the mystery of it, and would look reverently into the hearts and souls of some of the good men and women who have been a part of it; if you would understand something of the mystery; see, as in a glass darkly, the national soul in the individual; and glimpse the Divine purpose working itself out in nation and individual—then buy Wilfrid Meynell's "Halt! Who Goes There?"

In form it consists of pages from the diary of a widowed nursing sister, and letters from the trenches by the late Captain Owen Tudor, V. C.

Here is a passage which will give an idea of the matter and style of this remarkable little book: Captain Tudor is trying to understand "this England." Captain Shireburn is the last representative of an old English Catholic family.

"He," soliloquizes Owen, "a Roman Catholic, one of the components of this England, could at least tell me why he came to fight the battle of an officially Protestant country. Religion (I hold) lies at the heart of patriotism, and we have banned the Roman."

We shall have to pass over some delightful banter on Shireburn's part about the "facts that falsify phrases—'Freedom of Conscience,' 'Liberty of Thought.'"

"I, a Holy Roman, am yet right loyal to a Protestant King—God save him! But you—if he becomes a Roman Catholic: you bluster and threaten to turn your backs on him. He can't be the most glorious thing in all the world (as I count it), and remain King."

Nor can he, we might add parenthetically, enjoy Freedom of Conscience or Liberty of Thought.

But we must positively skip a few pages sparkling with humor—good humor—of the discussion between the Protestant Tudor and the Catholic Shireburn. The latter continues:

"Well! say I'd fight with an added happiness, for a land firm in the Faith of my Fathers. Still, the Establishment of a Church, though not mine, seems right enough as a national recognition of religion. So I don't go about grousing because the Church of the majority is established here, and the Church of the majority in Scotland. But, by the way, the same rule doesn't apply to the Church of the majority in Ireland, a separate treatment that politicians somehow never spar over. Sorry to rub it in, Owen; but there's a fact again believing the phrase—you put Religious Liberty on your banners—and on your bans. But bother back: hands: I'm really out, as you know, for a hearty shake. 'This England' in a sense is not only the greatest Protestant and the greatest Mahometan but also the greatest Catholic power—a my heart and my sword at her service sir!"

"Think of it—the British Empire to-day holds as many Bishops in communion with Rome as sat at the whole Council of Trent. Think of it—there are as many English-speaking Catholics in the world now as Catholics in all Christendom at Christendom's flowering time—the time of the last Crusades. And, just as in Rome were more Jews than in

Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion, so now in London are more Catholic communicants on Sunday mornings than in Catholicism's own capital—in Papal Rome. Go to the great Missionary College at Mill Hill, and learn that Catholic England is moreover a mighty Gospeller to the heathen: the Superior General of that one single College will tell you quite simply that he has more than two hundred Fathers now out on their distant Missions. Ask Quebec, with all her old-time religious rights and privileges guaranteed to her under our flag, if she would change it. Ask Malta with its State Catholic Church. Ask Maynooth, the State-endowed nursery of the priesthood of a nation. Ask the oratorian at South Kensington, or the Jesuit at Farm Street, or the Carmelite in Kensington, and all will tell you that they fare better in Babylon than in their birth-lands, Italy and Spain. Ask, all England over, priests and nuns expelled from lands that ought to know better, ask for the name of the land of religious freedom. Ask the hundreds of Catholic Chaplains with the troops, officers of the King, maintained by his Treasury, or supplied by the Governments of Canada or Australia—martyrs to duty among them like Gwynn of the Irish Guards; men like Fahey, who gained the D. S. O. at Gallipoli. Ask any pious Catholic soldier of the King, with his prayer-book in his kit provided by the Government, as no Government of a nominally Catholic country so provides it. And, Owen, I don't even know where soldiers outside the British Empire demand it—and that's the cornerstone, in a way, of all my wordy structure. That belongs to the soul of 'This England.'"

Brendan O'Neal is an Irishman drawn with delicacy, sympathy and truth.

"War declared in Europe meant, he said, another war declared within himself, rooms were not roomy enough for him. He went out into the open and walked the Wicklow Hills.

"As he drank that keen mountain air, he seemed to see Ireland suddenly transformed into the little hill-country of Judea. Ireland's problem in relation to the British Empire merely repeated the problem of Jewry in relation to the Roman. A peasant couple passed him, on a high track, and in them he seemed to see a man and a woman. In ages long ago, travelling to a far town to be enumerated in the census of a mighty Empire, perhaps to be taxed the mere fancy came to him, to reduce some outstanding debt for the very expedition which added Britain to the Roman sway. And he thought of One born beneath Caesar's sway, a member of the subject race, one who yet answered the challenger: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.' On His lips had sounded the praise of the Centurion; and to be content with their pay was His Apostle's one recorded counsel to those legionaries, emblems at once of Roman dominion and Roman protection—the Pax Romana which had closed for the nonce the doors of the Temple of Janus.

"And then Brendan thought of Ireland, of the peace she had enjoyed, the prosperity that was surely coming of her people firm planted on their soil, the old wrongs, uprooted. From where he stood, he could trace, miles out at sea, the smoky trail of a war-ship—the sign that England stood sentry. The British navy—Ireland's sure shield! To the Gael of today, the hill-side winds seemed to recount 'Render unto Caesar.' The similarities of the two countries in their respective relations to the great external Temporal Power, the applicability of that spoken word to the present path of duty for an Irishman took him like trumpets, struck him like swords. He had decided his duty, and dedicated himself to it, before he slept. Even so, all that night he could hear in his dreams Belgium waiting to him like a woman."

In another place Brendan says: "So measure by the story of Irish martyrdom the immensity of Irish magnanimity, and count it among the assets of Christianity."

Lengthy as are the extracts given they do not give an adequate idea of the wholesome and healing influence of Mr. Meynell's contribution to the literature of the War. McLellan and Goodchild, Toronto, are the Canadian publishers.

John Dillon in his great speech, May 11th, after reading Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington's statements, which we re-publish elsewhere, made this modest demand:

"I make this appeal to the Government. I do not want to embitter this matter by any charges against offices. I do not wish to mention any names, but I think the Prime

Minister will readily admit that nothing but a public inquiry is demanded as a matter of elementary justice to this unhappy lady for the cruel injury which has been inflicted upon her. To tell us there will be a court-martial which, of course, will be secret, and that we may be sure justice will be done, is really an outrage upon every principle of fair play."

This appeal would be modest enough in Russia, in Turkey—or even in Germany.

A month later we have a secret court-martial at which Captain Bowen-Colthurst is found guilty of murder—and insane at the time.

As we write the papers have the following despatch:

"London, June 16.—The lawyer for Mrs. F. Sheehy-Skeffington, widow of the editor of The Irish Citizen, who was executed without trial during the recent Irish uprising, has written to Premier Asquith that his client is profoundly dissatisfied with the findings of the court-martial and is urgently pressing for a public inquiry. The court-martial found Capt. Bowen-Colthurst, of the Royal Irish Rifles, who ordered the execution of Skeffington, and two other journalists, named Dickson and McIntyre, guilty of murder, but held that, he was insane at the time the acts were committed."

"Mrs. Skeffington's lawyer says important facts were not revealed at the court-martial. He makes new charges against Capt. Colthurst and specifies a witness whom he wishes to have called."

"Executed without trial" as a euphemism for murder is callous and contemptible.

Dare Mr. Asquith or the Government condone this whole hideous business by refusing a public enquiry?

Even the Christian Guardian, with no undue sympathy for the Irish, and presumably no knowledge of the situation beyond that furnished by the bare references in press despatches, is shocked:

"The trial of Capt. Bowen-Colthurst for the murder of F. S. Skeffington, editor of the Irish Citizen, has brought to light the startling fact that this British officer had actually had three men shot in cold blood without a trial. The claim is now made that he was not responsible for his actions, but it cannot be struck the public that it is pretty late in the day to discover this fact. The captain may be acquitted on the plea of irresponsibility, but it cannot be doubted that if anything were needed to settle the fate of the former Dublin Regime this awful act of Capt. Bowen-Colthurst would surely prove sufficient."

This editorial comment of The Guardian helps us to hope that the honest indignation of honest Englishmen will force official England to grant a public inquiry into this atrocious crime, martial law or no martial law.

THE HONORABLE J. J. FOY

After a lengthy illness the Honorable James Joseph Foy, former Attorney-General of Ontario, died last week in Toronto.

Mr. Foy was the Catholic representative in the Ontario Cabinet from the time of his party's coming into power in 1905 until ill-health incapacitated him for the active duties of public office; he remained, however, a member of the government, without portfolio, until his death.

Mr. Foy was educated in St. Michael's College and in Ushaw College, England. He was called to the Bar in 1871 at the age of twenty-four; ten years later he was elected a Bencher of the Law Society and in 1888 was created a Q. C.

It speaks well both for Mr. Foy and for Protestant Toronto that he was elected five times successively for a Toronto constituency.

The Globe pays this generous and deserved tribute to an old political opponent:

"It falls to the fate of few public men to have so many personal friends and so few personal enemies, as the late Mr. J. J. Foy. The explanation is, in part at least, that while he had real ability, it was of the unobtrusive sort, and that his kindness of heart and gentleness of manner were so obviously uncalculated that it was easy for him to disarm an opponent or at least ward off an attack. Somewhat late in life he entered the political arena, for which he was handicapped by lack of both physical strength and robustness of temperament. He would have adorned the Bench, and it was generally expected that he would have been appointed to a Superior Court Judgeship, if he had cared to signify a willingness to accept one. It was currently believed, while he was still a member of the Conservative Opposition, that he declined such an offer through fear of weakening his leader, the late Sir James Whitney. The personal bond between the two men was one of genuine friendship quite as much as political association, and they had in common a strong element of the chivalrous that tended to keep them inseparable."

I GO A FISHING

This is not an intimation that we are about to take our holidays. It is a text from the last chapter of the Gospel of St. John. The speaker was the Prince of the Apostles. The company consisted of Thomas and Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. The occasion was the eve of that memorable day, when at sunrise on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, Christ gave to St. Peter the commission to feed His lambs and to feed His sheep. The incident reveals a very human trait in that very human man, whom Christ honored with the primacy of jurisdiction and the primacy of honor in His Church. St. Peter said to his companions, "I go a fishing," and they replied, "We also come with Thee," and the context adds: "That night they caught nothing." We might remark here,

in passing, that this is one of the few authentic fish stories and speaks well for the veracity of the Apostles.

"Behold we have left all things and have followed thee. What therefore shall we have?" said St. Peter to Our Lord, when he heard Him promise a treasure in heaven to the rich young man, if he would sell his goods, give the money to the poor and follow Him. The critics of St. Peter have tried to belittle the sacrifice that he made in accepting the Apostolate. They have stigmatized these words of his as boastful and presumptuous. "What did he leave," said they, "but some nets and a couple of old boats." St. Jerome answered them by pointing out that he sacrifices much, who sacrifices all he has. If this able apologist had, in his youth, hidden his fishing pole under a Juniper bush or had waded out into the rapids to cast his line into an open and under fire and will entail great and unnecessary sacrifice."

The Minister concludes thus: "I do not know whether or not your attention has been drawn to this fact, but there can be no harm in making a suggestion. I presume, however, the whole matter rests with our mutual friend, Sir Douglas Haig."

"Hoping you will kindly give this matter consideration, or submit it to Sir Douglas Haig for consideration."

This letter is dated March 24th, 1916. On the night of the 23rd of May, 1916, Mr. Winston Churchill made a very impressive speech in the British House of Commons. His speech was frankly critical; but as a press despatch remarks: "His criticisms attracted attention because they were not merely destructive—they contained many elements of constructive policy."

It is, however, to this one point we wish to direct attention:

"In the course of his speech Mr. Churchill made special reference to a point which has been the subject of much discussion in London. It was a question, said he, whether in a war England should continue to hold indefinitely positions of no vital consequence where her men were at an utter disadvantage, and where, owing to the superior observation and positions of the enemy's artillery, the proportion of Britain's daily losses was very much higher than that of the enemy."

"The reference was, of course, to the Ypres salient."

So it appears that the point raised by Sir Sam a month previously was "a subject of much discussion in London."

It is evident that the former First Lord of the Admiralty, who had just returned from active service on the firing line, agreed absolutely with the view of the Canadian officers on the spot, and that he expressed himself publicly in much more vigorous terms than those used by the Canadian Minister of Militia in his very courteous private letter conveying the views of Canadian officers to the Minister of War.

With no desire to influence or offend political partisans we thought it well to place these two views in juxtaposition that our readers may form their own opinions of the attempts of a section of our press to hold up to ridicule the Minister of Militia as a megalomaniac war lord second only to the caricatured Kaiser himself.

Can we not be honest political partisans for honest political reasons? Or must loyalty to party be so interpreted as to justify such indecent and pitiful misrepresentation of every prominent man in the public service whose party affiliations place him amongst our political opponents.

Where to find all the truth

When Protestants left the old Church centuries ago they carried much with them. They left much more behind them. And this we would give them back, says the Baltimore Catholic Review. One Catholic truth or another is professed by some Protestant sect. And if they would all unite and profess them all together, they would all be Catholic. In the Catholic Church they would find nothing lacking to make their happiness complete. To all of them we would repeat what we only today read about the saying of a Baptist minister to a brother he was trying to convert: "Come, all you, and be baptized." "But Ah've been baptized by the Presbyterians," said Rastus. "Lo'd!" cried the Baptist minister, "yo' only been dry cleaned."

ON THE BATTLE LINE

News comes from Britain that the movement of troops to France has been greatly accelerated since the naval action in the North Sea. That engagement proved that the Germans had no 17-inch guns, no new super-Dreadnoughts with which the Admiralty was unfamiliar, and no new methods of maritime warfare. An invasion of Great Britain, backed by the German High Seas fleet, as it appeared in its full strength in the battle of Skagerrack, is now recognized as an impossibility, and many thousands of men who have been on garrison duty in the United Kingdom are being transferred to the front in France and Flanders. It is generally believed that on the British front, and in cantonments behind it, there are not less than 1,800,000 men, whereas the Germans have not more than 800,000 on the same portion of the battle-line. The half-million British troops in excess of Germany's total will form a formidable striking force should General Joffre determine that the time has come to use it. The recovery of the Lens coal field and of the Lille textile region will almost certainly be the objective of the British, if, as is generally believed in London, an advance is shortly to be undertaken.

The approximate total of the Russian captures during Thursday's operations was 100 officers and 14,000 men. The grand total for less than two weeks is about 166,500—and the Austrians are still on the run. The heaviest fighting at the moment is taking place in Galicia, west of the Lower Stripa. There the Austrians have been reinforced by German troops, who are trying to interpose an effective barrier between the advancing Slavs and Lemberg. The centre of this battle is northwest of Buczacz, and Petrograd states that the struggle continues unceasingly. When last night's report was compiled the Russians had captured on this part of the front 6,000 prisoners. The Russian pressure here will be added to when the army that has driven the Austrians out of Northern Bukovina progresses as far west as Kolomea and begins to strike at the railways which feed and supply the Austro-Germans along the Lower Stripa. An Austrian report claims a repulse of the Russian cavalry south of the Dniester, and on the Stripa the capture of 400 Russians.

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Where in Canada will you find a more lively and orthodox faith, a faith that manifests itself in higher ideals and more magnificent accomplishments for the Church, than among the Irish and especially Scotch people who know the fishing banks off the coast of Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces? It might not be safe to carry our comparison farther west; but is it not true that, in Ontario, the Catholic settlements are, for the most part, close to the banks of our rivers and the shores of our lakes? Many reasons, we know, can be given for this and we

do not wish to be understood as attaching any mystic significance to it. The fact nevertheless remains. There comes to our mind a picture of broad and monotonous acres, of massive barns emblematic of material prosperity, and of homes wherein a fish is never needed for Friday, and if it were, would have to be imported. As a contrast to this we recall a scene in which the joyous festivities of a shore dinner are associated with the spire and cross that proclaim the faith of the fathers of the village who sleep beneath the grassy slope, that stretches down to the water's edge, awaiting the resurrection morn.

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Italian official reports are now absolutely reassuring. Rome begins to speak of "the vain and bloody efforts to break through our resistance, which is now thoroughly consolidated on the whole front." The attempted invasion of Venetia must be added to the dash for Paris, the attempt to hack a way to Calais, the Verdun drive and other unsuccessful efforts of the German General Staff to strike a decisive blow. The Austrian assaults on the Asiago plateau during the past few days have brought no gain of territory, and the retreating enemy has left piles of dead in front of the Italian positions. In the Lagarina Valley also desperate hand-to-hand fighting resulted in the routing of the Austrians. The heart has gone out of their offensive.—Globe, June 17.

WHERE TO FIND ALL THE TRUTH

When Protestants left the old Church centuries ago they carried much with them. They left much more behind them. And this we would give them back, says the Baltimore Catholic Review. One Catholic truth or another is professed by some Protestant sect. And if they would all unite and profess them all together, they would all be Catholic. In the Catholic Church they would find nothing lacking to make their happiness complete. To all of them we would repeat what we only today read about the saying of a Baptist minister to a brother he was trying to convert: "Come, all you, and be baptized." "But Ah've been baptized by the Presbyterians," said Rastus. "Lo'd!" cried the Baptist minister, "yo' only been dry cleaned."

Where in Canada will you find a more lively and orthodox faith, a faith that manifests itself in higher ideals and more magnificent accomplishments for the Church, than among the Irish and especially Scotch people who know the fishing banks off the coast of Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces? It might not be safe to carry our comparison farther west; but is it not true that, in Ontario, the Catholic settlements are, for the most part, close to the banks of our rivers and the shores of our lakes? Many reasons, we know, can be given for this and we

do not wish to be understood as attaching any mystic significance to it. The fact nevertheless remains. There comes to our mind a picture of broad and monotonous acres, of massive barns emblematic of material prosperity, and of homes wherein a fish is never needed for Friday, and if it were, would have to be imported. As a contrast to this we recall a scene in which the joyous festivities of a shore dinner are associated with the spire and cross that proclaim the faith of the fathers of the village who sleep beneath the grassy slope, that stretches down to the water's edge, awaiting the resurrection morn.

THE GLEANER

ON THE BATTLE LINE

News comes from Britain that the movement of troops to France has been greatly accelerated since the naval action in the North Sea. That engagement proved that the Germans had no 17-inch guns, no new super-Dreadnoughts with which the Admiralty was unfamiliar, and no new methods of maritime warfare. An invasion of Great Britain, backed by the German High Seas fleet, as it appeared in its full strength in the battle of Skagerrack, is now recognized as an impossibility, and many thousands of men who have been on garrison duty in the United Kingdom are being transferred to the front in France and Flanders. It is generally believed that on the British front, and in cantonments behind it, there are not less than 1,800,000 men, whereas the Germans have not more than 800,000 on the same portion of the battle-line. The half-million British troops in excess of Germany's total will form a formidable striking force should General Joffre determine that the time has come to use it. The recovery of the Lens coal field and of the Lille textile region will almost certainly be the objective of the British, if, as is generally believed in London, an advance is shortly to be undertaken.

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