

"One would think," she laughed gaily, "I had just stepped into the midst of an intrigue."

The Captain laughed a little disconcertedly. "Madame is back soon," he said.

"Yes! M. Lalonde readily acceded to my plan."

"And yet it is said that he is quite obstinate."

"I have never found him so."

Raoul had walked to the car, and Madame de Fernand soon joined him.

"We shall see you on the 15th, Captain. Adieu!"

On the morning of the 15th Madame de Fernand arose with haste, for the day was to be filled with events.

Louise entered with the morning coffee. Her eyes were red and her face swollen, and Madame was slightly annoyed.

"Louise, you have been crying again!"

"Yes, Madame," she replied. "All night I have lain awake and prayed to the Virgin Mother that this terrible war might stop and my sons return home safe."

Her mistress was irritated. For the last two weeks she had heard the continual whimpering of Louise over the war.

"And did you not think, Louise, to pray for the victory of France? Tonight light a candle for that intention."

As Madame de Fernand drove to the little corner of the Bois de Boulogne, which was to be the scene of the temporary encampment, she thought of the happenings of the past few weeks—events which had suddenly, it seemed, turned a world from the indifference of peace to the turmoil of war.

She thought of the men who today would leave for the conflict, many of whom would never return; but they would be heroes, and France would never forget them.

The mother country needed her sons now, and it was the duty of all to give them readily and uncomplainingly. She thought of Louise and of her reproach that morning. Perhaps she had spoken too sharply. Faithful old Louise, whose very life was wrapped around her sons and the little grandchildren! She thought of her own son. He had gone off early that morning to be with La Touche till the last moment. What a man he was growing to be!

A crowd had gathered at the park, and a cheer arose as her car stopped before the tent in which were the Captain and his officers. She trembled a little when, standing beside La Touche, she looked at the expectant faces before her. They were all familiar—men who had been associates of her husband, and in whose society she had moved for many years.

She spoke to them of bravery and courage. She pictured to them their country honored if they fought valiantly, or crushed if they shirked their duty. She denounced the enemy fiercely and with all the prejudice born of partisanship. She spoke to the women and lauded the privilege which was theirs in rendering their service. "You are giving noble men to a noble cause. Do it in a noble manner."

Again the soldiers cheered. They would do all she asked, and give their very life-blood for France; and, as the cheer died away, the lustle of the departure began. Gray-jacketed figures with silver buttons snatched a final kiss or hand-pressure from the woman standing solid and unflinching. Madame de Fernand viewed the scene with admiration. Only a little woman standing near her was sobbing unrestrainedly. She had just felt the arms of a straight young man who had abruptly set her down and hurried away. Madame patted the girl's shoulder.

"Do not weep, Annette!" she said. "Your husband may come back a hero."

The girl's shoulders shook in an abandonment of grief.

"He was all I had. Madame, you have a son: what if he were taken from you?"

The woman winced and there was a pause.

"Were my son a man, I would give him gladly to my country."

"He is a man."

It was a voice behind her, and she turned quickly. Before her stood Raoul, dressed in the full uniform of La Touche's company.

She looked at him uncomprehendingly, with eyes opening wide with surprise. How came Raoul to be dressed in that uniform and looking at her guiltily? Why did a sudden silence fall before her? For she was vaguely aware that the standers-by had turned their attention to the scene. Even the little woman had for a moment ceased her sobs.

Raoul was mute, yet his face told all. In it were blended exultation and anxiety, and to Madame de Fernand it revealed his message; he had enlisted. She tried to think clearly, but the thoughts in her mind came swiftly and confusedly. She could not grasp any meaning to it, so great and so sudden was the reality. The band began playing, and the crowd stirred. Somewhere they were beginning to form into line. The blare of the bugle aroused her, and over the face of Raoul she saw the look of dread disappear. And then she felt his arms about her, and she thought she could hear his heart beat as he held her and whispered: "I will come back. Do not fear, maman!" Then an awkward boyish kiss, and he was gone.

She walked back to her car unknowingly, and sat down to wait—for what she did not know. She was aware of La Touche coming

through the car up to her car, and felt him lift her hand and kiss it. Through a cloud of stupor, she heard him murmur: "Forgive me! Raoul would have joined some other regiment if not mine."

The cloud had lifted for a moment. "I will watch over him, Madame, and bring him back to you. Adieu and au revoir!"

She dimly heard the booming of the Marseillaise and saw La Touche riding at the head of the company. She stood up rigidly when Raoul passed, and gazed after him till he had disappeared and the crowd had begun to scatter.

She did not know how she had returned home. At the door she remembered having fallen fainting into the arms of old Louise. And then she had known nothing till once she had stood up in terror and repeated over and over again, "Raoul is gone!"

How long the days seemed as the summer gradually drifted into autumn; for she reckoned them now only by the alarming bulletins from the distant battlefields. There were reports from the North of the terrible cannon of the enemy that dealt such devastating blows to the little towns and villages; she gloried in the victories of the French at Altkirch and Mulhausen, and sighed over their repulsion at Verdun. Then came the advance of the enemy toward Paris, rapid and alarming, till from the chateau she could hear the booming of the cannon and see the clouds of smoke. But that had not lasted long, and soon came the reports that the invaders had begun to retreat. One evening she found a short paragraph about La Touche. His company had been fighting around Verdun. The losses had been heavy, and La Touche himself had been seriously wounded. Madame de Fernand trembled as she read; the paper slipped from her hand, and for the first time since Raoul had left came a flood of relieving tears.

A warm September sun shone down on the garden of the Chateau de Fernand. Its brilliancy seemed reflected in the flower beds gay with asters and marigolds; but Madame de Fernand, walking slowly on the grass, saw nothing. Her thoughts were far from her surroundings.

Louise, with market basket on her arm, came into the garden and walked toward her mistress.

"Does Madame wish anything special at the market this morning?" she asked.

"No, Louise," was the answer. "It matters but little what you get. Have you had any news of your Andre or Pierre yet?"

"No, Madame; but every day I go to the bulletin boards and read the names. I shall go there this morning when I have finished my marketing."

But there is no need of that, Louise. The lists are printed every day in the newspapers."

"Yes, Madame, but after I have gone there in the morning, I feel relieved for the rest of the day. I do it all the way that I shall not see Andre or Pierre Dubois."

"And then read the bulletins with fear," said Madame de Fernand.

"Oh, the good God does not answer all prayers!" Louise replied with resignation.

After Louise had gone, Madame de Fernand walked slowly into the house. In her boudoir she sat before the window, watching and waiting for Louise's return. An hour later, when the old servant appeared, she stood up in suspense. Louise was walking quickly and nervously, far different from her usual steady plodding; and, as she neared, her face showed signs of anxiety. Madame de Fernand's heart sank in fear as she hurried downstairs and burst into the kitchen as Louise entered from without.

"Louise, Louise," she cried, "there is bad news! Tell me what it is!"

The old servant dropped into a chair, sobbing, her head bent. She did not look at her mistress. Madame grasped her arms and shook her violently.

"Louise, tell me quickly! Is it Andre or Pierre?"

"Ah, Madame, would that it were instead of—oh, I can not tell you!"

Madame de Fernand's hold relaxed.

"It is Raoul," she said—"Raoul is killed!"

That night, in the old servant's room, they knelt before the little altar on which flickered two candles before an image of the Blessed Virgin. Louise still prayed for her sons, but in Madame de Fernand's heart there was a fervent prayer for the thousands of other mothers that were bereft that day.

TRUST THE CHURCH OF GOD ALWAYS

"Trust the Church of God implicitly, even when your natural judgment would take a different course from hers and would induce you to question her prudence or her correctness. Recollect what a hard task she has; how she is sure to be criticized and spoken against whatever she does; recollect how much she needs your loyal and tender devotion. Recollect, too, how long is the experience gained in eighteen hundred years, and what a right she has to claim your assent to principles which have had so extended and so triumphant a trial. Thank her that she has kept the faith safe for so many generations, and do your part in helping her to transmit it to generations after you."—Cardinal Newman.

THE SECULARIZED RELIGION

AND ITS FRUITS

A layman writing to The Reformed Church Review, a Protestant monthly, pointedly calls attention of the ministry to the reasons underlying the failure of the Church. The writer's protest is that while the modern Church is trying to "Christianize the social and civil life" of the world, the world is "rapidly secularizing" the Church. The writer believes that under the euphonious expression of "social service" the Church is being committed to new methods of reform that divert it from the exercise of its proper functions. That he understands the conditions is evident from the following:

"The sacred edifice heretofore dedicated to the worship of Almighty God has now, with its parish-house, its club, and other auxiliaries, become the centre of secular functions. We now go to Church to hear sermons on the minimum wage, adequate housing of the poor, the regulation of moving pictures and dance-halls, how to vote, and the latest vice-investigation report. From this centre agents and detectives of Law and Order societies make report of nightly investigations; and it is said even ministers of the Gospel keep silent watch during the hours of the night and assist in rounding up inmates from disreputable houses. They appear as prosecutors and witnesses before grand and petit juries in the Quarter Sessions Court. Billiard and dancing classes organized, and all sorts of amusements offered to entice the youth within its sacred precincts. A child returning home from Sunday school recently was asked by its mother the subject of the lesson. It was how to keep the streets clean. Another Sunday, kindness to dumb animals furnished the subject of the lesson, and this was in a graded Sunday school up-to-date. A good woman who had suffered greatly with a recent sorrow brought herself to church longing for some comforting word. She heard a sermon on the Charity Organization Society and the Visiting Nurse."

A MONARCH'S CHARITY

The monarch in question is Alfonso XIII, King of Spain. Almost every day the Madrid press publishes conclusive proofs of the humanitarian and charitable services rendered by our young ruler, since the outbreak of the war, in behalf of the wounded and the prisoners of the belligerent countries, as well as of the desolate and sorrowing families of those who have disappeared in the turmoil or have fallen on the field of battle.

On becoming acquainted with the splendid work of mercy accomplished for humanity in these days of sorrow and anguish by their Sovereign, Spaniards of every class and party are filled with legitimate feelings of consolation and joy. People of every foreign country, they are sure, will share in these emotions. In all his noble efforts for suffering humanity, the Spanish Monarch is only following the footsteps and the example of the Holy Father. And, he it is said in passing, it is to the Supreme Pontiff that the world is turning for help in this terrible tragedy. While doing so, all hearts are filled with deep gratitude and emotion for his untiring efforts to diminish in every possible way the horrors and sufferings of the contest.

Very shortly after the declaration of war, indeed just after the first shock of the hostile forces had begun to crimson the soil of Europe and to bring sorrow and misery to countless homes, the Royal Palace in the Plaza de Oriente was, so to say, deluged with letters, all bathed in tears. The sad messages deepened into a very wave of sorrow, rising constantly to a higher crest. The mounting tide surged to the gates of the Royal Alcazar. There, the writers of the sad missives knew, their supplications would reach the heart of a magnanimous prince, to whom Providence seemed to have assigned the noble role of mediator and consoler in the dark hour of this frightful struggle.

From the pages of these letters rose a wail and a prayer. The eyes of fathers, mothers, wives, sisters and friends of the combatants turned to the young sovereign, asking news of the loved ones who had disappeared or begging his intercession to obtain the complete remission, or at least the mitigation, of sentences imposed by military tribunals. The heart of the King was moved, and yielding to his generous impulses, he immediately ordered his own private offices turned into a bureau of information to take cognizance of all these war cases. With only one end in view, the good which he might thus accomplish in behalf of all those who were suffering from the effects of the terrible struggle, he increased his staff of secretaries and assumed as his own the subsequent financial outlay. He had the pleasure to find that the bureau thus constituted was working efficiently and with the most consoling results. The number of letters received by the King's secretaries amounts on an average to 700 a day. On some days as many as 3,000 are received. From the hour the bureau of relief was organized, it is estimated that more than 200,000 petitions have been registered. In the archives belonging to the office there are records on file dealing with the fate of 160,000 French prisoners and war sufferers, whose residence it has so far been impossible to ascertain. The solicitude of the Monarch extends also to the prison camps, especially to those established in Germany. The members of the Spanish Embassy in Berlin visit these camps and hospitals regularly in order to become personally acquainted with the sanitary conditions, etc., and to see for themselves how the prisoners are treated. They then report to the King, who in turn communicates these data to the various belligerent nations, which have requested Spain to watch over their interests. But this is not the only service thus

generously given by the Spanish Monarch. A special department in the bureau has been organized to seek and find news of those who are in the territories occupied by the German armies and who have not been able to communicate with their relatives or friends. In order to further the ends of this department, a special system of proclamations, advertisements and notices has been arranged. Notices have been sent to the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin, who forwards them to the German authorities. These then inform the mayors of the localities where it is hoped that some clue may be found. The latter in turn send back whatever news is available, and thus, very often, correspondence is re-established between those who for a long time had not heard from each other. Nor can we omit to mention the personal efforts of the Monarch in behalf of those who are condemned by the military tribunals. For some he obtains complete pardon. In the case of minor offences, the sentence, at his request, has been often commuted. Thanks to his efforts, war-cripples and the desperately wounded were frequently sent back to their homes. The Russian journalist, Jantchetzky, and his seven companions in captivity and misfortune; the Austrian Admiral, Muller; M. Theodor, Dean of the Brussels Bar; the Prince of Salm-Salm, and many others, must surely be ever grateful to the noble and generous Monarch for his efforts to alleviate their lot and secure their liberty.

Such in brief is the work of mercy which a Catholic and Spanish King is accomplishing for suffering humanity in these days of sorrow and woe. Two angels of Christian charity seem, for the moment, to have folded their wings and taken up their abode on the heights of the Vatican and under the walls of the Royal Alcazar of the Court of Spain. The Sovereign of all Christendom and the Sovereign of a Catholic people are constantly working hand-in-hand to diminish the sufferings of the countless victims of this cruel war. And thus, over the dark clouds which shroud the horizon, they shed the bright rays of mercy, consolation and love. —Norberto Torcal, in America.

of all his learning so that, strengthened on all sides, he is indeed prepared for the battle of life. To the religious teacher to whom, indeed, "Efficiency" is the watchword—for he works for Him who said: "Be ye perfect"—send your child, and you will never feel regret.—New World.

BETTER THAN THE BEST

If you would have practical proof for what you should know in your heart is best for your boy, how is the following for all-around testimony that the Catholic school betters the best, even in purely secular matters? It was afforded by a college in Brooklyn, St. Francis, but who will say it is not a fair example of all Catholic schools and colleges?

In that good borough of Greater New York, one of the dailies, the Eagle, arranged an attractive setting and then invited the boys and girls of the borough to come and show what good spellers they were. The popularity of the journal and the number of the contestants brought a large audience to the Spelling Bee. Practically all of Brooklyn was represented there and, after a well-fought battle, witnessed the triumph of a little lad from St. Francis College, and of all parochial school girls who gained second honors.

So much for the mere book learning in Catholic schools. But perhaps in these schools, where teaching is so excellent, the boys have several other task-masters—ones the students fear but do not love. "Let's see," said the Eagle, "in which school is the best-loved teacher." And the paper sent broadcast an announcement that an automobile would be awarded to the man or woman voted the most popular teacher of Brooklyn. The contest was a vigorous one. Hundreds of teachers are the ideals of their pupils in Brooklyn, but that a big majority of the borough held one of the "Francis Brothers" as the best loved teacher was clearly evidenced and was late evidenced, for the closing of the poll saw him high in the lead—and his fellow-contestants with one accord voiced the justness of the award.

Good scholars! cherished teachers! So far, so good. But how are these girls and boys fitted for their place in the world? What do they know, even in a childish way, of the problems of today? After all, doesn't their religious training keep them ignorant of the world's progress—that "progress" of which our age is so proud.

"What does any school child know of history in the making of current topics? Suppose we find out." Was the way the Brooklyn Eagle looked at the question. So a "Current Topics Contest" was inaugurated and several thousand grown-ups gathered to be amused, were quickly astounded (and, we must add, shamed, by the readiness with which these youths answered some three hundred questions that covered happenings in the world, the city, the borough since 1916 began.

The contest was close and more boys and girls held their ground than their parents would have done but the contestants finally lessened to a dozen, to three, to one, and—the one was a St. Francis boy!

Book-learning, sympathetic teachers, as fine a knowledge of the great world outside as school-boy could hope for, they were all there in this Catholic school and how much besides! Those great questions that public contests do not even touch: Who made you? Why are you here? Where are you going? are taught the parochial-school child as soon as he can think, are made the foundation

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truth. Those who run may read of the thousands of stately universities, secondary and common schools erected by the Church, schools in which at all times as today the very highest standards of education were kept up. But confine your vision to America. Look around you. Count our schools, our outlay, our double tax; reckon the sacrifices made, and tell me whether or not the Church is not interested in and the very best friend of education. Look around you in this ancient city. See our schools built out of our poverty and then tell us what think you of the charges made by the enemies of the faith.

BISHOP CURLEY ON LOVE OF COUNTRY AS AN ACT OF RELIGION

Bishop Curley of St. Augustine, Pa., at the recent blessing of the Cathedral parish school there, said in part:

"To-day from one end of the land to the other we hear from the lips of the republic's children the cry of patriotism. We hear it from the devout and careless, from the religious and irreligious. Yet how few there are who regard love of country as an act of religion, as intimately connected with an flowing from love of God! This however, is what real patriotism is; this is the Catholic teaching concerning it. After God comes country. God is the author of society. As I am bound to love my God, so am I bound to love my country. Just as I have an obligation to serve my Creator, so, too, have I an obligation to serve my country. God and country! They are not to be separated. When I am taught from my earliest youth to know and serve God, when I am brought up to see God's hand in society and recognize God's authority in civil government, I am at the same time trained in a patriotism that is a real, deep, religious conviction, and that will never set limits to sacrifice to be made in the service of my country. Patriotism thus inculcated is deep-seated, becomes a very habit of the soul. This, my friends, is precisely the patriotism that will be taught in this parochial school, this patriotism taught by Catholicism for twenty centuries, this the patriotism of Catholics in America, which has given ample proof of its existence since the earliest infancy of the republic. It stands written in blood on the pages of American history, and can no more be wiped from the republic's records than can the sun be snatched from the heavens. "Where religion permeates education this patriotism is imparted. Hence no children in America shall ever surpass in love of country the little ones whose souls will be formed in this parish school of St. Augustine."

THE CHURCH THE FRIEND OF EDUCATION
"The Catholic population is small, in spite of the fact that a stranger in the state today might be justified in concluding that Catholics form 75% of the total population if he were to judge the strength of the Church from the organized bitter opposition and vilification that are carried on against it from one end of the state to the other.

"With eyes blinded to the educational work of the Church, her enemies have heralded abroad that she has been and is the enemy of education. Must I waste time in the refutation of such a statement? It ought not to be necessary. From her earliest days in every land where she was free and untrammelled she dotted the hillsides and valleys with schools as well as with churches. There is no means of appealing to minds warped by bigotry and prejudice; such minds are impervious to

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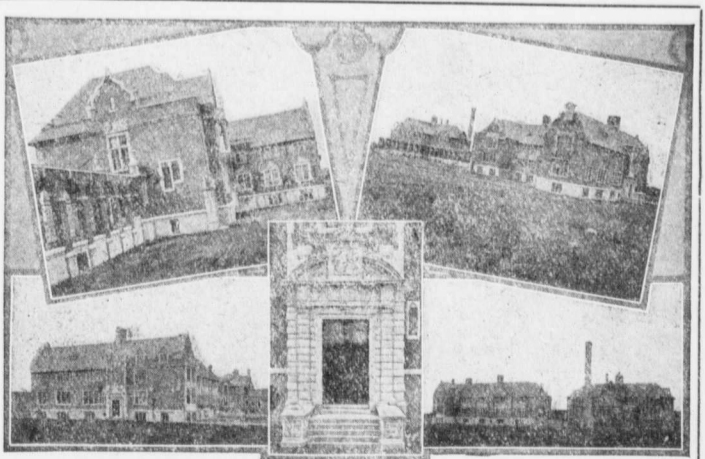
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