

"What ails the little one?" asked a gruff voice.

"Margot looked up. First she saw a mass of tawny beard, and then, higher up, a pair of soft blue eyes which encouraged her.

"She told him the whole story—how the light had come on the Virgin's face as in the story of Madame L'Epine, how they had prayed each day, and now the light had vanished. And he cannot see," she concluded sadly.

"You really and truly believed that the virgin would give him his sight. Is it not so?" said the man.

"But, yes," replied Margot, "we were sure of it."

"Mon Dieu, what faith!" exclaimed the man.

"Drawing a handkerchief from his pocket, he gently wiped the little boy's face, then, lifting the lids, he peered closely into the sightless orbs.

"While he was doing so, Margot, with the keen eyes of womanhood, observed him. He was untidy. His collar was rumpled and his neck-cloth was bunched into an ungraceful knot. His clothes were wrinkled and needed brushing and his beard was tangled.

"Hum, hum," muttered the untidy man, "is it that you and the little one could walk to Lyons?"

"Without doubt—it is only five miles."

"He took a card from his pocket, wrote some words on it and handed it to Margot.

"Come Thursday morning," he said, and walked off.

"Margot put the card in her pocket without looking at it, and sadly the two children walked home.

"When Madame Lerouge pressed her sobbing little boy to her breast she wished she had told the children that the light was no miracle.

"Bon jour, everybody," cried a cheery voice in the doorway.

"They looked up and Paul Bonlieu stood smiling at them. Paul was a travelling salesman for a house in Paris and sold goods all over Switzerland and the Tyrol. He was home on a visit to his mother.

"Why, what is the matter?" he asked, anxiously observing the downcast faces.

"Madame liked Paul very much. His mother lived a few doors below and she had known him from a child. Hence they told him the card the man had given Margot.

"She handed it to him. She had not looked at it.

"Sapristi," he exclaimed as he read it, "sapristi!"

"It was a very plain card with the following inscription: 'Dr. Augustine Suchet, Rue de les vignes No. 9.' At the bottom were some words in a language Paul could not understand, written in pencil.

"What do you mean, Paul?" cried Madame Lerouge, "crouching" "sapristi," like a crow in an oak-leaf. "Pardon, but it is strange! This is the card of Dr. Suchet—the most famous oculist in Lyons. He has a very large practice and has been called to Paris for consultations."

"It must be a mistake," put in Margot; this man was very untidy and careless in his dress."

"Poof, that goes for nothing! These scientific men care nothing for appearances. I have heard of a great professor in Paris who is not allowed to go on the street until his wife looks him over. He would go in his slippers and without a collar."

"Then you think the children should go to Lyons, as he asked?" said Madame Lerouge.

"Paul thought for a moment and then he thumbed the table lustily.

"Without doubt they should go," he cried. "Did not the children pray to the Holy Mother for help? How do we know but that she has sent Dr. Suchet in answer to their prayers?"

"Now they all had great confidence in Paul. He had travelled over many countries and had seen many people. His advice seemed valuable to those who had never been ten miles from their native town.

"Another doctor," sighed Madame Lerouge. "We have had several and they could do nothing, and then such a man as this Doctor Suchet must charge enormous fees. How could I pay a large bill?"

"Madame Lerouge," said Paul, "I really believe that the Holy Mother sent Dr. Suchet in answer to the prayers of Margot and Louis. It certainly looks that way. Now, she does nothing by halves, and if she sent the doctor you need have no fears about anything more. Let the children go. I would call on the President if he had invited me."

"On Thursday morning Margot, who had a day off from the cigarette factory, Louis and I started on our walk to Lyons. It was a lovely morning, with little fleecy clouds sailing over the sky like fair ships. The whole world seemed bright and cheerful. The birds sang gleefully and an old black crow perched on a dead tree flapped his wings as we passed as if he were wishing us bon voyage.

"We felt a bit frightened when we reached the big city, so different with its bustle and crowds from our little town, but the little blind boy was a passport everywhere. When we asked the way to the Rue de les vignes, a *gen d'arme* walked a half-square to point out the direction and a dear old woman gave Louis a cake and a kiss.

"Rue de les vignes was evidently an aristocratic street. The houses were large and handsome, and fine equipages rolled up and down the street. Number 9 was a very fine house and two carriages stood before the door.

"We hesitated before we mounted the steps. Were we to find the invited announced to nothing more than that some one had imper-

sonated Dr. Suchet, or were we to experience the disappointment of hearing that the case was incurable? Finally Margot summoned up her courage and rang the door-bell. An old man answered the summons.

"Monsieur le Docteur is engaged. He can see no one," he said curtly.

"Margot timidly handed him the card. He looked at it, and when he came to the scribble at the bottom his face changed its snappish expression.

"Pardon he exclaimed, politely, 'be pleased to enter.'

"He ushered us into a wide hallway, along which he led us to a rather small apartment at the rear, into which he bowed us. 'Monsieur le Docteur will see you at once,' he said. 'Be seated.'

"Nervously we awaited the coming of the doctor. The room was evidently an operating place, for there was a curious looking chair near the table strewn with odd-looking instruments. Presently the man who had accosted Margot before St. Jacques came hurriedly into the room. He merely nodded to us, but patted Louis on the head. Perhaps his wife had looked him over that morning for he was quite tidy.

"He placed Louis in the odd-shaped chair, which we now saw had a contrivance for holding the head stationary. Then another man, evidently an assistant, came in and they both examined Louis' eyes, speaking in low tones to each other. The assistant handed the doctor an instrument which he used very quickly then another, and then a flash. Just then Louis uttered a sharp cry, and we both shuddered as we thought of the pain the little fellow must be suffering, but the doctor seemed not to notice it.

"Very quickly the two men began to bind a thick bandage over Louis' eyes, and when this was completed lifted him from the chair. 'The bandage must not be removed,' he said impressively, 'not on any account. Return next Thursday.'

"When we reached the street we walked some distance in silence for we were too agitated to talk. Then Louis, who had been unusually silent stopped suddenly. 'Margot,' he said slowly, 'there was a sharp pain, and then the doctor slipped the bandage over my eyes. But just for a second before he did so—oh, Margot, I believe I saw a light!'

"We were too young to be long depressed, and as we walked home all three of us were chattering about the events of the day.

"That week had led tied to its heels. We hoped, and then scolded ourselves because we did hope, only to find ourselves hoping again. Madame Lerouge was very nervous, for she feared that it would end as before with a disappointment which might seriously fret Louis. Paul Bonlieu had departed on one of his selling trips, but as a comfort we had in his place Pere Leo.

"Why not hope?" said the Pere. "Who would doubt that the intercession of the Holy Mother could restore the sight of any one? Then, why not to Louis? I shall hope," continued the Pere, stoutly, "until the end."

"Every day Margot and Louis went to St. Jacques and prayed that the operation might prove a success. "Finally the fateful Thursday arrived—the day which was to settle our hopes and fears. It was a peevish morning, with the thunder growling behind the hills and every now and then a dash of rain. Despite the discouraging outlook we started bravely, and as we progressed the day became brighter and finally the sun came out.

"This time the old door-keeper smiled genially and touched Louis' shoulder, saying, 'Good luck!'

"Again the doctor placed Louis in the chair, and after darkening the room took off the bandage. The examination required but a few moments, and then the bandage was replaced.

"Let the bandage remain over his eyes until Sunday," said the doctor to Margot, "then remove it for an hour in a dark room. The next day take it off for two hours, and increase an hour each day in a dark room. After a week you can leave the bandage on and gradually accustom the eyes to the light. He will see perfectly if you follow these directions."

"Margot seized the doctor's hand and kissed it, but he drew it away from her.

"But monsieur," said Margot, "about your bill?"

"Time enough for that," snapped the doctor. "Good morning."

"We did as the doctor directed, and Louis in month's time had as good eyes as any one, but Madame Lerouge was worried about the bill she must pay.

"One morning the mailman left a letter at the house that had a Lyons postmark and Madame Lerouge trembled. It was addressed to Margot.

"When Margot came from the factory for dinner, she opened the letter and read in amazement:

"For services rendered to Louis Lerouge, Margot and Louis shall pay each month for one year a prayer to the Holy Virgin that I may always have the same faith that they had."

"Augustine Suchet."

One may be insupportable even with virtue, talent, and good conduct. Manners, which one neglects sometimes as little things not worthy of notice, are just those very things from which men often decide our character.—La Bruyere.

CATHOLICS AND THE LAW OF NATIONS

By Father Charles Plater, S. J., M. A.

The war aims of the Allies may be condensed into a phrase: we fight to establish the Law of Nations. The war aim of the restoration of Belgium is the outstanding example of the vindication of that law. The war aim of substituting Right for Might is but a statement of the law of Nations in more general terms. We make war as St. Augustine says, to secure peace; not any kind of peace, but a peace which recognizes the Law of Nations. We may focus our aspirations and all our resolves in the demand: "Let the Law of Nations stand."

For recently it has been tottering; and Germany's bull rush has threatened to bring it down with a crash. Yet it is not in Germany alone that the Law of Nations has been undermined. Read modern text books of international law, and what do you find? The authors laboriously collect customs and conventions, tabulate treaties and tell us what has been—of what ought to be they have little to say. The Law of Nations is relegated to the lumber room. Yet without it treaties and conventions are so many scraps of paper.

Neglect God's law and what is the result? Man's law crumbles into ruins. For why, after all, should a man keep any longer than it is convenient to keep them, unless there be a God who will punish the violation of them? By what means shall we establish international peace unless we take as our starting point the establishment of the Law of Nations?

Shall we turn to a League of Nations? Yes, but this, too, will be a mere imposition of strength, and might become a tyranny unless the Law of Nations be its basis.

Shall we agitate for democratic control of foreign policy? Many place all their hopes in such agitation. It does not seem to occur to them that even democratic control may become demoralized. A big control may get out of gear as well as a small one.

Disarmament? Who will disarm in presence of a foe to whom the Law of Nations is but a meaningless phrase?

All these plans for permanent peace are as a body without a soul: the Law of Nations must be their guiding spirit.

What, then, is our hope? To the two international forces of Christianity and of labor we chiefly look: or let us rather say, to the one force of Christianized labor. "Go to the people," as Leo XIII. exhorted; but go to them with a scheme of the Universe which does not leave out the Maker of the Universe: a scheme which leaves room alike for patriotism and for humanity: a scheme which, unlike pacifism and militarism, leaves out nothing that is of value.

Every nation needs to search its own heart and to set its own house in order. A Peace Palace must be reared, not of stone, but of compact human wills and its basis must be the Law of Nations.

Here is work for us all, and not merely for the expert and the politician. Most of all, here is work for Catholics in every land: since they alone are the heirs of the great tradition of international law, and in their hands it has been worked out with a precision and thoroughness not found elsewhere.

Few of us are experts in such matters as national claims, race affinities, traditional boundaries and the like. But we can all learn to grasp and to disseminate certain simple moral principles about which there must be agreement before these more complicated questions can be settled.

To these principles we must earnestly turn our minds. Mere lip-service will not suffice. We must assimilate them and impress them on the public conscience in every land. The War, which has churned up men's minds and shaken them out of the rut of opportunism, gives us our chance. But we must not only fight for peace; we must work for it. And fighting or working we must keep steadily before our mind the Law of Nations. People must not be allowed to brush it aside as an academic unreality; they must be persuaded to consider it, to ask what it is and what are its bearings.

Here is a plain issue, a simple and most necessary propaganda: and though, as has been said, Catholics should take a leading part in it, all men of good will can find themselves able to co-operate in it: for it is a matter not of distinctive Catholic dogma but of natural justice and ordinary moral perception.—New World.

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD BE DONE BY

To treat the one next to you as you would treat yourself,—this is the alpha and omega of God's requirement as set forth by Christ and emphasized by His apostles. To be as just, as generous, as honest and as true with that one as you would be with yourself,—this is the sum of all that is asked of you in this life. No impossible task, to be gauged by your ability to understand intricate questions, no devious way to be worked out only with the aid of learned guides, but just the giving to others of what you would give to yourself,—doing as you would be done by.

It has been well said that a true Christian should have but one fear—lest he should not hope enough. The

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vice which more directly antagonizes hope is despair, but presumption uses and abuses it. The virtue that is made to hurt hope is prudence degenerated into cowardice, which also conscripts humility into its craven service. Discouragement aches humility; and timidity, like a man without any appetite who boasts of his Lenten fast, poses as discretion.—Rev. Walter Elliott, C. S. P.

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OUT 'mid bursting shell and battle's roar; out in the awful abyss

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home, a brave Canadian mother's son is, this minute, fighting, bleed-

ing, dying—enduring all the agonies of this terrible conflict that the

world may be free. There, amid the victorious cheers of our men, the

maddening curses of a savage foe, the cries of the stricken and the

wails of the dying, his mind goes back to Canada, to the land he loved

so well; to a dear old mother's home, to the comforts he found there.

He sees her bent in longing for her boy "Over There," and his heart aches to com-

fort her with a letter of good cheer. Hear him, in a voice with anguish filled, calling,

pleading, praying to those for whom he fights, to furnish him with the comforts

that they themselves would want.

We carry to YOU this plea from far across the sea, from your loved ones "Over

There," that they may have a few of the comforts that YOU daily enjoy.

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