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LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1916

THE SHEPHERD OF THE NORTH

A year and a half ago in reviewing "Socialism or Faith," then running as a serial story in the Ecclesiastical Review, we expressed the belief that the mantle of Father Sheehan had fallen on the Rev. Richard Amerle Maher, O. S. A., of Havana, Cuba.

This novel—whose title we ventured to call unattractive, even repellent—has been published in book form by Benziger under the title of "The Heart of a Man." In this story we have a vivid picture of the conditions which make for Socialism and lawlessness and at the same time that call imperatively for the healing spiritual influence of religion.

Here Father Maher deals with a concrete condition—"a condition little better than slavery itself," to quote Leo XIII.—in a concrete way. There is no theoretical denunciation, no empty-handed destructive criticism, none of the abstract orthodoxy that leaves the real problem—the cause of Socialism—untouched. No; he makes God's priest go down amongst his people and face squarely the problems that enter into their very life-blood. There is no shirking the awful fact that their condition is little better than slavery itself. With Father Maher it is no abstract question of the doctrines of Karl Marx and the dogmas of the Church. His people live and toil and suffer and struggle to be free. It is real life with real life tragedies; the human heart pulsing with all the human passions and emotions. And all held in the relentless grip of the up-to-date Ebenezer Scrooge—the modern captain of industry, acting entirely within his legal rights while depriving his workmen of every human right, even the right to live.

LANGUAGE NOT RELIGION

Commenting on the introduction of bilingualism into the debates of the House of Commons, Toronto Saturday Night asserts that it is a question with which Protestants have only an indirect interest as it is essentially a dispute between "two branches of the Roman Catholic Church."

The London Free Press discussing the same subject says in effect the same thing and further declares that it originated with Bishop Fallon.

There may be differences of opinion on the importance or on the merits of the bilingual controversy, it may have been right or it may have been wrong to bring it within the purview of federal politics; but there can be no difference of opinion as to the necessity of being informed as to the facts before discussing it publicly.

We have stated these facts before. Nevertheless the statements of the papers cited above—and others might be added—demonstrate the need of restating them.

The bilingual question is not a Separate school question. It did not originate in the Separate schools, but in the Public schools of Prescott and Russell. Two Reports of Commissions of Enquiry may be had from the Department of Education; one in 1889, the other in 1893. These Commissions had nothing to do with Separate schools; they dealt with French (now called bilingual) Public schools.

The matter first engaged public attention in 1885. In 1886 it was the chief issue in the Ontario provincial elections. But then, as now, there was so much ignorance of the facts that the campaign degenerated into a campaign against Separate schools. True, that ignorance of the facts of the question is not so widespread as in 1886. But so far as it goes it is quite as pernicious and less excusable. Needless to say that if the whole province was convulsed in an electoral campaign over this question in 1886 it did not originate with Bishop Fallon. The Bishop was not old enough to vote at that election.

The bilingual question is not at the present time confined to Separate schools. Nearly all the bilingual schools throughout the northern part of the province are Public schools.

It is true that the trouble in Ottawa, where the most noise is made, is entirely within the Separate schools. If the whole trouble were centred there—and Protestants were only mildly and indirectly interested—a solution could be very easily found. If the English-speaking Catholics—and these include all of foreign origin who will have nothing to do

with the foremost leaders of capital or in the humblest ranks of labor.

Indeed it is characteristic of the wholesome, optimistic belief of Father Maher that he paints no evil character in unrelieved colors. Clifford W. Stanton, who controls the railway interests, like John Sargent in the earlier story who controlled the mills, has the heart of a man.

Interwoven with the lives of those whom the reader comes to love is the secret of the confessional—that tremendous seal of secrecy that can be broken for no consideration on earth.

Rafe Gadbeau dragging himself up to the bare rocks where the Bishop and Ruth Lansing have taken refuge from the appalling devastation of the forest fire, confesses to the Bishop that he had shot Rodgers. Ruth standing as far away as possible overheard the dying man shriek out this part of his confession. Jeffrey Whiting, whom the Bishop loves with a father's love and Ruth loves with the love of woman, is charged with the murder.

We shall not attempt a resumé of the intensely dramatic situation which develops. Suffice it to say that with his intense and unquestioning faith in the spiritual, with his knowledge of the human heart in all its natural human weakness, but his knowledge, too, of its supernatural strength, the priestly author realistically portrays the situation which only a Catholic—and perhaps only a Catholic—can readily understand.

Clean, wholesome, full of action and full of human interest; the spiritual always unobtrusively dominating and explaining the material, "The Shepherd of the North" is far and away more true to real life than the novel which makes the joys and griefs, passions and emotions of the human heart the ultimate motives of human conduct.

THE NATIONALIST MANIFESTO

Sane, dignified, forceful, convincing is the manifesto of the Irish Parliamentary Party to the people of Ireland.

"Either Ireland is to be given over to unsuccessful revolution and anarchy, or the constitutional movement is to have the full support of the Irish people and go on till it has completed its work."

Calmly, without exaggeration, in sober language they recount the victories won, the reforms achieved by constitutional means. Whatever success the poets, dreamers, socialists and anti-clericals of the Sinn Fein might have in the past, in the light of their recent futile and infantile recourse to physical force, the Irish people may be trusted to respond whole-heartedly to the solemn appeal of their constitutional leaders.

T. P. O'Connor's letter will throw some light on the situation both as regards Irish and English opinion. It is hard to see how even a section of the people of Ireland could for a time fail to recognize that the Irish Party have achieved the greatest triumphs in the parliamentary history of the world.

In the editorial, "Ireland, Let us Face the Realities," from the Chronicle, London, England, we have evidence that the people of England are fully alive to the anomalies of the Irish situation, and it is well that Irishmen everywhere should realize that it is a grievous mistake to hold England, as a whole, responsible for what the best judgment of the overwhelming majority of Englishmen condemn.

A SECOND SPRING

Judging from the signs on the religious horizon of to-day, the great popular cult of the next period in the Church's history will be devotion to the Holy Ghost. As an evidence of this we might point to the increase of zeal with which both clergy and laity are entering into the spirit of the Pentecostal novena. When Leo XIII. ordered this novena to be made, his instructions did not at first meet with a very enthusiastic response. It is true that the people, unlike those to whom St. Paul preached, believed in the Holy Ghost; but their knowledge was too vague to call forth any spontaneous outpourings of the heart. This was due to at least two causes. First of all this devotion is so purely spiritual that it appeals solely to faith, unaided by any natural impulses. We can form conceptions of Our Lord or His Blessed Mother, we can idealize them because they possess our nature; but the Holy Ghost, being a pure spirit, does not appeal to the senses or to the emotions.

Again, is it not true, that the feast of Pentecost has often been let pass without any adequate explanation of its religious significance? Coinciding as it does with the month of the Sacred Heart, pastors were prone to lay stress upon the devotion that they knew would appeal to the people rather than upon the one which they deemed perhaps too spiritual to be adapted to the capacity of their hearers. We are sure that many priests will admit that the obligation imposed upon them by the decree of the Holy Father, to prepare the people by special devotions and instructions for the worthy celebration of the feast of Pentecost, has on the principle of "docendo discimus" opened up new vistas in their own mind, in which they viewed more clearly the wonderful beauty of the divine plan of sanctification. These instructions, accompanied by God's grace, have had a corresponding influence on the minds of the people, who have begun to realize that the greatest gift of the Sacred Heart to man was the Holy Ghost, who have begun to understand more adequately the meaning of that synonym for Pentecost viz., "The Birthday of the Catholic Church."

Another proof that we may adduce in defence of our thesis, is that God, in His Providence, has always raised up some particular devotion to counteract a contemporary evil. Devotion to the Sacred Heart was an antidote to the cold, chilling errors of Jansenism. Devotion to Mary Immaculate was a remedy for the licentiousness of modern life. What, we may ask, is the great evil of to-day? It is the denial of the supernatural,

the case of new districts to stay away. The terms "invasion" and "conquest" are appropriate.

This it is that makes the bilingual school question a language question that affects all Ontario irrespective of religion.

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the exclusion of God from His own creation. Outside of the Catholic Church the supernatural is ignored, if not denied. No doubt there are many individuals, outside of the body of the Church, who still cling to reveal tenets and who have aspirations beyond this world of sense; but theirs is the remnants of a legacy left them by their Catholic forbears, or a kindly gift from that treasure house of faith near which they dwell. It is not in any sense the property of the sect to which they claim allegiance. The only lodestone that will draw men out of this slough of materialism into which they have blindly sunk, and in which they are tearing at each other's throats and vainly groping for peace and light, is that Spirit of Truth, that Spirit of Charity, that Supernatural Power that came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost. That was the first springtime of the Church. The earth was void and empty of virtue, of charity and of truth. But the Spirit of God breathed upon it, through the lips of those upon whose heads had descended the tongues of fire, and the face of the earth was renewed.

May we not hope that a second springtime of grace is near at hand, that the winter of national hatred, the clouds of doubt and despair, the bleak, chilling winds of greedy materialism may give way before the kindly warmth of that Spirit that still dwells in our midst though many know Him not. If men but realized what the Church is, they would go to her for light and consolation. Armies, weary of slaughter, cry out in anguish "If Christ were but here we would go to Him, we would listen to Him, we would obey Him; but we cannot go to an institution, however venerable. It must be an individual." That is precisely what the Church is. It is a Person. It is the Incarnation perpetuated. It is the mystical body of Christ, animated by the Holy Ghost, Who is its soul. It was the Holy Ghost Who foretold the Incarnation, by the mouth of Isaiah. It was the Holy Ghost, Who wrought the Incarnation in the womb of Mary. It is He Who perpetuates the Incarnation through the ministry of the priesthood, who receive from Him power over the real body of Christ in the Eucharist and power over His mystical body, the members of His Church, in the Sacrament of Penance. As a writer has beautifully expressed it: "What the dove was at the Jordan, what the cloud was on Thabor, that the visible Church is now viz., the external sign of the presence of the Holy Ghost."

Today the Church stands serene and undismayed, amid the clash of arms and the wreck of nations. She can say to her persecutors with infinitely greater assurance than the King of the Belgians could say to the Kaiser: "You have not conquered my soul;" for the soul of that Church is Divine. The Church stands today the unswerving, inflexible witness of the truth; because she is the mouthpiece of the Spirit of Truth, Who guides and directs her. The Church stands today an unsurpassed example of unity in a world of discord; because she is animated by one Spirit. In very truth she is a Person. The same loving, kindly, compassionate, Divine Person. That, through the medium of a human body, shed tears at the grave of Lazarus and pardoned the penitent Magdalen, today, through the medium of a mystical body, which is His visible Church, continues to dispense His graces through the ministry of His Spirit. God grant that the realization of this truth may seize upon the minds of men and usher in a new springtime of peace, of unity and of charity.

THE GLEANER.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE QUESTION of Shakespeare's religious belief is one of perennial interest as it is one of fruitful discussion from time to time in literary periodicals. Fruitful, in the sense of passing beyond the region of speculation the discussion can perhaps hardly be said to be, but the fund of antiquarian information which it has been the means of unearthing has amply redeemed it from any imputation of sterility. The subject certainly is interesting in itself as everything relating to the great dramatist must always be, and it should be especially so to Catholics whose heritage embraces the whole history of England for over a thousand years.

THE THREE hundredth anniversary of the Bard's death has brought the

question to the fore again and given renewed zest to the enquiry.

Nothing definite, as we have intimated, may ever be arrived at on the subject, but it is important nevertheless that the attitude of so profound and penetrating an intellect to the subject of religious belief should be examined in its relation to the times in which he lived. Shakespeare stood midway between the Age of Faith and the coming age of pure speculation. He saw the crumbling of the ancient fabric of Belief and the rise in its place in the England which he loved of almost universal doubt. That he was sensible of the preciousness of the heritage which had thus ruthlessly been cast away at the bidding of a licentious king his plays abundantly prove, and that he found his highest inspiration in the Catholic ideals of the past no thoughtful student of them can deny. But that he was himself what we call a practical Catholic is by no means so certain.

THE LATEST contribution from a Catholic standpoint to the very considerable body of literature on the subject which has grown up in recent years, is that of the Dominican Father, Thomas M. Schwertner in the Rosary Magazine for April. His conclusion, we may say at the outset, is adverse to the poet's Catholicity, at least to his practical Catholicity. In support of the view that he was a Catholic there is, as the Dominican calls to mind, the undoubted fact that both his parents were so, and faithfully practised their religion. There is also the rather significant fact that seventy years after the poet's death, a certain Protestant divine called Davis, declared that Shakespeare "died a Papist"—a statement which may well have represented the popular tradition about him.

BUT ON THE other hand, as Father Schwertner judiciously avers, a man may "die a Papist" without having lived as one, and the evidence in existence is not propitious to the supposition that Shakespeare lived as a Catholic. Perhaps, adds the writer referred to, if we are to take Davis literally we might conclude that the great dramatist after living a life of indifference to religious practices, was vouchsafed the inestimable grace of seeing a priest before his death and of making his peace with God—which presumption is in full accord with his known reverence for things Catholic and his family antecedents. That he had, what the Dominican writer calls "an aesthetic love" for the Church, a good knowledge of her teaching, and the "ideal medieval man's reverence for priest and friar" cannot be disputed. But whether it be right or wrong, Father Schwertner affirms that the view which denies him the honor of being a practising or orthodox Catholic during his life, is the view steadily growing into currency amongst unpartisan students of Shakespeare. But whatever may be said in regard to his life, it at least, can hardly be questioned that the world's greatest dramatist, living in the period he did and sprung from the good Catholic stock which we know his forbears to have been, was in his own person and in the product of his genius the fruit of Catholicity.

IN THE course of a lengthy deliverance in the Mail and Empire on the subject of church union, as proposed between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational bodies, "A Presbyterian Layman" refers to Milton and Cromwell as "men of faith and matchless fortitude, foes to tyranny whether crowned or uncrowned, whether ecclesiastical or lay." This is a good example of the reckless and indiscriminating way in which adherents of the sects are accustomed to refer to their fancied heroes of the past. That Milton was an Arian, and hence had no true conception of Christ's divinity, does not of course effect his status as a "man of faith" in the estimation of this representative Presbyterian. And, putting aside for the moment Cromwell's part in English history, his exploits in Ireland, his violation of the most solemn compacts, the massacre of Drogheda, and the pathway of blood, ruin and desolation which he left behind him there does not of course invalidate his claim as a "foe to tyranny." We hear much and deservedly in these days of German atrocities, and "scraps of paper" but even the modern Hun has failed to outdo Cromwell's perfidy and rapacity in Ireland. And yet these liberty-loving Presbyterians can shut their eyes to all that and

laud him and others like him to the very skies as saints and heroes.

REFERENCE to Presbyterian instability in this generation, calls to mind that Presbyterian Scotland is having its own share of anxieties and misgivings. The decay of dogma and the decided falling-off in church attendance which has exercised the minds of leaders in the Kirk and in the so-called Free churches for some years past show no signs of diminishing, and, on top of those evils comes another most ominous one in the declining birth-rate. A prominent sociologist who has been pursuing investigations into the subject, contributes to the Edinburgh Scotsman an article entitled "Stand Up, Ye Dead!" which a contemporary characterizes as "a series of appalling revelations," and which may well be accepted as such in face of the statistics furnished as to the progress of race-suicide in Scotland generally and in the city of Edinburgh in particular. Race-suicide, as it has come to be called, is shown by these investigations to be the policy deliberately adopted by a luxurious, selfish, and irreligious nation. A few figures may serve to illustrate this unpleasant truth.

FOR THE nation as a whole a birth-rate of 35.6 per 1,000 in 1874, decreased to 33.7 in 1880; to 32.9 in 1886; to 30.4 in 1890; and to 28.8 in 1912. And Edinburgh has been leading the van in this process of sterilization. In 1871 there were 84 children born in that city for every 1,000 of its inhabitants; in the year of 1915 this number had shrunk to 17. In other words, the metropolis of Scotland has deliberately sacrificed half its children in 44 years. It is worse than France, which under the aegis of secularization has been pointed to as the greatest transgressor in this respect. "To puritanic Scotland a generation ago," says the writer in the Scotsman, "France was often quoted as a solemn warning of the depths to which atheism and materialism bring a nation. Today Scotland as a whole is only four points behind France, and the city of Edinburgh has outstripped even France, and though this policy of the silent nursery and the empty cradle is a policy of racial doom, the land of the Covenanters and the capital of Presbyterianism have made it their own. They have out-heroded Herod."

AT THIS rate, continues in effect the same writer, in another year or two Edinburgh will be a dying city, and that which the poverty and hardship of the past failed to do, the prosperity of the present will accomplish. Race-suicide is thinning out the population in a way more thorough, more effective and more permanent than famine, pestilence or War. For these evils will terminate but the habit of race-suicide once engendered, eats into the very vitals of a nation in a way that nothing else can do, and in the absence of any fixed and authoritative moral code, cannot be overcome. It is in this respect that Scotland is more desperately situated than was France a generation ago. For, while France in its public life and in its government had apostatized from the Faith, the heart of the nation remained sound, and the instinct of Catholic faith was always there to counteract and to correct the evil. So that under the awful scourge of War, France exhibits at this day a regenerated country and a return of its people, long apathetic, to their highest welfare, to their allegiance to God and His Church. Scotland has no such recuperative power within it except it cast aside its heresies and return once more as a nation to its spiritual allegiance. And in the healthy expansion of the Catholic Faith in Scotland in recent years, so long banned and proscribed, lies the country's one solitary hope of spiritual and material rejuvenation.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ANCESTORS

"It is well to remember that some four centuries ago your ancestors and mine were Roman Catholic believers," says Rev. B. W. Boyton, a Unitarian minister, in the Buffalo Courier, N. Y. "That is the Mother Church, and whatever faults she may have had, we should not hurl abuse at our mother or applaud that course in others. The Catholic cause may be going backward in France and Italy, but it is going forward in Germany, England and the United States. This fact causes a contagious nervous dread in many people which breaks out in angry opposition and misrepresentation. It is like the attitude of children who are afraid 'The goblins 'll get you if you don't watch out.'"