

## The Catholic Record

Price of subscription—\$2.00 per annum.  
United States and Europe—\$2.50.

Publisher & Proprietor, Thomas Coffey, L.L.D.  
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Address business letters to the Manager.  
Classified Advertising 15 cents per line.  
Remittance must accompany the order.  
Where CATHOLIC RECORD Box address is  
required send 10 cents to prepay expense of  
postage upon replies.

Obituary and marriage notices cannot be  
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Each insertion 50 cents.

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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAR. 15, 1924

### OUR EDITOR

Our readers will regret to hear of the sudden and serious illness of Dr. Foley, our Editor. Dr. Foley was suddenly stricken with an acute attack of appendicitis on Tuesday, March 4th. He was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital, London, where an operation was performed. Unfortunately before the operation could be performed the appendix had burst. This, of course, has greatly aggravated the case. At the time of our going to press, the doctors in attendance assure us that his condition is as favorable as could possibly be expected, and that he is holding his own. All that medical skill can do is being employed to help him fight for recovery, there remains only for us to offer a prayer to God, that if it be His Holy Will, Dr. Foley may be spared many years to carry on the work which he has so ably conducted during the past fourteen years as Editor of the CATHOLIC RECORD.

### LENT

Lent is a season of fasting and abstinence. During it the Church commands her children to restrict themselves in the matter of their diet. The wisdom of the Church in so doing, from a purely materialistic viewpoint, is simply attested by eminent physicians the world over. They are almost unanimously agreed that the people eat too much, and that to this excessive eating many of the physical ills to which man is heir can be traced as a cause. Apropos of this fact, it may be worth while mentioning that "the Ministry of Health in England," to quote from the Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion, "has found it worth time and attention to study the dietary arrangements of a monastery where self-denial is the rule of life and where strict dietary arrangements are followed. Dr. Monckton Copeman, of the Ministry of Health, has paid certain visits of investigation to a Carthusian Monastery at Parkminster, Sussex, to find that influenza, though rampant in the neighborhood, never crossed the monastery threshold, and that the fruit and vegetables eaten by the monks in place of meat were manifestly valuable in respect of diminishing cancer. A Catholic can well understand that those who seek first the Kingdom of God have other things added to them, but it is no less gratifying to recognize that a great public Department moving along scientific lines considers that it may learn something of value from a mode of life which has been so utterly despised by the modern world."

The foregoing speaks for itself but we would be afraid to proclaim too loudly and stress too forcibly the result of the investigation as conducted by the Department of Health in England, lest, perhaps, some individual or group of individuals, actuated by love of humanity and loyalty to the State, should start an agitation for a law prohibiting the slaughter of cattle, sheep, and hogs, for eating purposes and—have it passed and then those of us who desire a juicy steak or well-turned chop or a rasher of bacon, will have to go to our physician and get a permit to purchase such for medicinal use only. Therefore we

restrain ourselves from emphasizing unduly the untold bodily benefits to be gained from abstaining from meat.

Lent is primarily a season set aside to benefit the soul of man. Lent is a season of self-denial and mortification, and, as such, it is a direct challenge to the selfishness and worldliness of the times in which we live. There is no question, but that we are living in a pleasure-loving age and that anything which tends to curb our inclinations to extract all the pleasure possible out of life is considered as something ugly and unnecessary. Lent is a challenge of the spirit against the materialism of the age. What would be the sense of mortifying the body and bringing it under subjection, unless there was an absolute need in order to gain an infinitely higher pleasure than the passing one which the unmortified body acquires. If this life is to be "the be-all and end-all," then truly "let us eat, drink and be merry." But as it has been said Lent is a direct challenge to such doctrines by placing vividly and practically before the minds of men that the spirit is more than the body.

Lent most of all is a cure for hypocrisy. As symptoms of disease disappear of their own accord as soon as the system is restored to sound health, so hypocrisy, which is but the sound of hollowness and insincerity in the religious nature, drops out of notice and is heard no more in those who strive to be honest with God and themselves.

Now is there any such thing as honesty in religion possible without watchfulness, care and pains? Is nature so enamored of virtue, and so little liable to depart from the straight lines of goodness, justice and rectitude, that it may be safely left to its own instinctive guidance? Why the constant clamour against wrongdoing, corruption, sin, if we are quite powerless to stem the tide bearing these in upon us?

When fire has got such full possession of a burning building that there is no chance to extinguish it, onlookers fall back listlessly, deploring the catastrophe, indeed, but making no efforts to do what they know is simply beyond their power. But how different their behavior, how they plan and hurry and work, sparing neither pains nor risk, when they see a chance of controlling the destroying element and saving property!

All comparisons fall a little short of their purpose, but this is not a bad illustration of the state in which we find ourselves. We are in the midst of dangers from within and without, irresolute and weak, yet playing for a stake which is nothing short of eternity. The way, indeed, is opened before us, for redemption is universal, but it depends upon ourselves whether we walk in the narrow path that leads to salvation, or be carried along with the heedless crowd, on the broad road which ends in everlasting misery.

And since it must be either the one or the other of these endings—for there is no mean—common sense cries out as well as religion, for the highest assurance we can get that our steps are directed aright, and carrying us every moment towards heaven. Surely in this at least, no room should be left for avoidable mistakes. Surely the whole matter should be steadily looked into, not with the gross eye of nature, but with the keen, far-reaching gaze of faith.

And what is the first thing, or at least one of the first things faith reports? That it is an easy task we are engaged in? Surely not, or it would not have so much to say about the straight way and the narrow gate; nor dwell with such iteration upon the necessity of denying ourselves daily, taking up the cross and following, not the instincts of nature, but the hard, uphill road that leads to Calvary. What means the brief but comprehensive direction "Be ye like Me," unless there is a call to copy His ways? And where is the likeness or beginnings of a likeness between a life of easy-going comfort, with what luxury we can command thrown in, and the bleak, bare crib, wherein He began His earthy career, or the bleaker, barer cross whereon He ended it?

Indeed if we were not so used to it we should be as much shocked as ashamed at the sight of the gross inconsistency between what we profess and what we do. When St. Paul speaks in one sentence of his

glorying in the cross of Christ, and in another tells how he chastised his body and brought it into subjection, there is no self-contradiction, no want of logic. His belief prompts his action, his action illustrates his belief. There is no room there for insincerity, no averring of his powers, to devote his talk to God, and all the rest to himself, as is unfortunately the case with easy-going Christians.

For is it not notorious that though Christ has told us, in very unmistakable terms, that not everyone who cries Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, we are yet, very commonly at least, quite contented with a service that goes no further than profession? We rejoice in the promises, but shut our eyes to the conditions, without which the promise is of no avail. Redemption indeed is universal. Christ died for all, but saves only those who turn to Him in loving obedience. And this is the practical difficulty. Do you obey? Do you by the spirit, that is the grace of God, mortify and keep down the works of the flesh—no matter what the effort may cost—and fashion yourself soul and body, upon the likeness of Him who did, not His own will, but the will of the Father? If you do, then, at every step of the process, you are making your own, you are incorporating into yourself, more and more of the Redemption, and so growing towards the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ. Crying out Lord, Lord, is easy but useless; doing the divine will is not so easy but—indispensable to salvation.

Here, as has been said above, all risks of self-deception should be avoided. Here, a mistake is of everlasting consequence, yet, to all seeming, is easily enough made. The world with its allurements of wealth and place and power, pride of the heart, the beauty of men and comeliness of women, weakness, selfishness, passion and all the rest, is it a small matter to meet and master the whole of them? There is one way surely of doing it, with complete success, and it is to make us certain that that is the way we are following, and not paths of our own choosing, that the Church with tender solicitude, calls us around her, two or three times a week, for the whole time of Lent, to make our duty so clear that the claims of self-respect may be added to the power of virtue, in turning ourselves in the right direction.

### CATHOLIC LENTEN PRACTICES

By THE OBSERVER

It is often the simpler things about our holy religion that we find it hardest to get non-Catholics to understand. Such, for instance, as the Catholic custom of fasting. Non-Catholics commonly look on this as a mere idiosyncrasy at the best, and sometimes they regard it as a sort of discipline which has for its purpose only to keep up the authority of the Church over us and to keep us in due subjection.

It is with surprise that non-Catholics hear for the first time that we have the Lenten fast upon the forty days fast of Christ. If fasting is a mere idiosyncrasy, custom, having no foundation in piety or no useful purpose in morals, why, we may ask them, did Christ fast? They will find it hard to answer that. "Why do you not eat meat on Friday?" asked a man of us one day, at the table of a hotel, and we said, "I will give you the answer that I learned in my catechism in my childhood; in honor and commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, on a Friday." He looked a little surprised and then said,—"Well, any other means of commemoration would do would it not?" "Perhaps so," we answered, "but this is the means appointed by lawful authority in my Church; and surely you do not object to the meaning and the purpose of it." And he said no, he did not, and was glad to understand it.

Catholic practices are sometimes admired even by those who do not adopt them or fully approve of them. We read somewhere a statement of a Catholic who was walking in a city one day with a non-Catholic friend when the Angelus rang and the Catholic raised his hat. "Look here," said his friend, "what is that about? I have seen that so often. What does it mean?" The Catholic began to explain. He told him how we recall the tremendous miracle of the Incarnation three times a day; with a little prayer to the Mother of God to intercede for

us with her Son, "Why it's beautiful," said the non-Catholic gentleman; "most beautiful."

But such appreciations are rare, comparatively. Nevertheless it is good for Catholics to be ready to explain correctly and simply when they are asked for information. Catholic practices are usually not understood at all by non-Catholics, and some of those that are the simplest and easiest to understand are the last to be understood or fairly considered. For instance, the Catholic practice of fasting. This is on the face of it a very wise, and at the same time a most logical practice. No man who knows the world can fail to see that the moral ills, and even the physical ills, of mankind, are due to indulgence of one sort or another. Why should any man who knows that that is so, be disposed to criticize us when we fast? Is not self-restraint the opposite of self-indulgence? Is not restraint one of the needs of the age in which we live? Is it not wise to restrain and deny ourselves a little; to lessen a little the too great absorption in the pleasures of life; and there is no sort of indulgence and pampering that is more attractive to the people of today than the pleasures of eating. A great many people eat too much; eat not because they need to but because they like to. A man who had been put upon a very strict diet by his physician said to us one day that he had never known, nor even dreamed that he could live and feel well and strong on so little as compared with what he had been used to eat all his life.

Yes, restraint in eating is a sure cure for gluttony if honestly practiced. Every form of self-restraint is good; for it strengthens the will and tends to keep the appetite in bounds that are reasonable. A young priest said to us one day that he never took all that he felt like taking at the table. We had remarked that he had not eaten much. Finally we asked him. Can't you eat any more? Feeling bound to tell us the truth, he answered that he could, and then explained that he always fasted a little; never took his full meal; leaving always a little of what he could eat if he wanted to do so. How beautiful that was; a little perpetual fast for the good of his soul and the honor and glory of God.

How many, we wonder, of those Catholics who are exempted or who exempt themselves, from the fast this Lent, will take up such a good practice as that, and one that would do them no harm at all in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred? How many will give up some little thing that they love, candy, for instance, tobacco during Lent? Such a practice would make up in some measure for their not fasting, but we fear that few ever think of doing any such thing, and once excused from the strict fast, they think no more of self-restraint or of sacrificing something they like for God's glory and in penance for their sins.

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

OF the much-advertised authors of the present day the fame of two especially rests upon their penchant for pandering to a craving for the marvelous or of outraging the most cherished beliefs of humanity. While H. G. Wells essays the role of an oracle and would reduce all things to the level of the human intellect, Arthur Conan Doyle, born and educated a Catholic, having early in his professional career cast away that secure sheet-anchor and avowed himself an out-and-out materialist, has now by violent rebound gone to the very limits of credulity. For the worship of the True God he has substituted that of disembodied spirits, and in his disordered imagination fairies have usurped the place of the angels.

IN THIS contingency it is interesting to note what Mr. Wells has to say of the spiritistic cult in general and of Conan Doyle's cherished delusions in particular. "In this fog of unprogressive delusions," he says in the February Strand, "there is no grain of substantial reality, nothing in it at all beyond deliberate fraud, self-deception, the will to believe marvels, the craving to be marvelous, the suggestibility of unguarded minds, tricks of divided personalities, uncritical treatment of coincidences and resemblances, the obstinacy of men committed to a view, very ancient traditions about ghosts and magic received as fables and then

strengthening to belief, reinforcing legends from the East, hallucinations fostered and welcomed and, last but not least, the moral decay and imaginative excesses due to the use of drugs." From this latter imputation the creator of Sherlock Holmes is of course exempt. It would be none the less instructive to read his retort.

DR. E. H. CHEERINGTON, General Secretary of the World League Against Alcoholism, told a gathering of Toronto ministers that the liquor traffic was not merely a great economical and political problem, but a moral problem into the bargain, and that "it was not to be solved by legislative assemblies or the deliberations of political parties, but by the practical application of the great truths of the Christian Gospel." Pity it is that that principle is not acted upon! All the forces behind Prohibition seem to act on the principle that in legislative enactment lies the only hope of their cause. Is that because they have reduced Christianity to a mere sentiment and ceased altogether to rely upon its precepts?

"THE THEORY that Roman Catholic churches secure more than their share of tax exemption because of their large holdings of vacant land is not borne out by Toronto's assessment figures" says the Globe. It is shown that while on Anglican Church lands valued at \$1,857,000, buildings valued at \$2,139,000 have been erected; on Methodist Church lands valued at \$1,439,000, buildings valued at \$1,857,000; and on Presbyterian lands valued at \$1,031,000, buildings are assessed at \$1,859,000; on Catholic Church lands set down at \$911,000, buildings to the value of \$1,638,000 have been erected. So that in regard to Catholic churches the land value is relatively less than any of the others. This should set at rest what has been matter of cavil in some quarters. At the same time it should be borne in mind that in proportion to the population of Toronto as a whole the Catholic contribution to charitable and philanthropic work shows to advantage. And the same is true of other communities throughout Canada.

STIMULATED no doubt by the revived spirit of nationhood no less than by the success which has attended the Olympic games, the ancient Irish gathering—the Aonach Tailteann—is to be revived in Dublin in August after an abeyance of centuries. And it is to be on a scale worthy of its traditions. These games were founded by Lugh-of-the-Long Arm, one of the Ancient Kings of Ireland in memory of his foster-mother, the beautiful Queen Tailte, hence the name, Aonach Tailteann. The games were held at Tara, the burial place of the Queen, almost without interruption it is said, down to the reign of Roderic O'Connor, the last monarch of Ireland.

THE ANCIENT annals, according to a well-informed writer, speak of the splendor of the festival in those days—of how the chieftains came in gorgeous cavalcades from all parts of Ireland, bringing with them athletes, harpists, singers and orators who had shown superiority in their own localities. These entered into the contest with the best of good feeling, old feuds being set aside by royal mandate for at least the time being. The festival, therefore, served a higher purpose than as a mere demonstration of athletic skill, since, we are further told, many old misunderstandings were removed and alliances formed which in many cases proved of a lasting character. The games' revival at this stage appealing as they do to an instinct inherent in the race, can hardly fail to have a beneficial effect towards bridging the still-existing breach between South and North.

THE GAMES of 1924 are planned on an elaborate scale, and will extend over a period of three weeks. The Dail Eireann has subsidised them; Mr. J. J. Walsh, T. D., long associated with Gaelic athletics, has been appointed director; and thirty committees have been formed to bring the long-cherished project to a successful issue. The form of the ancient festival is to be followed as closely as possible, and at the same time the theatres will be devoted to native art, music, and drama. England, Scotland, Wales, the United

States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentine and Chili have promised to send competitors so that it will be a gathering of world-wide interest, more especially to the "far-flung" Irish race.

### EVILS OF MODERN PLAYS

CRITIC SAYS FEW HAVE REAL VALUE

Rome, Feb. 28.—The Paris correspondent of the Osservatore Romano writes some frank criticisms of the French stage, and quotes in support of his view, not pulpit denunciations of its downward tendencies, but outspoken comments of the Paris press.

He notes that the dramatic critic of the Intransigent (one of the Left), M. Louis Descaves, in his survey of the theatres during the past year, states that on the Paris stage in 1923 there were 280 new pieces presented and 110 revivals, in all nearly 400 dramas, and gives it as his verdict that only about ten of them had any real value. A large number of them, he says, may be fairly described by using the word of Cambronne—"a rough bit of soldier slang that may be most decently translated by 'filth.'"

### GRAVE DECADENCE

Another writer in the Libre Parole expresses his regret that it is now quite a common thing to hear blasphemous expressions on the French stage though not long ago anything of the kind was regarded as the worst of bad taste, even if it were not found offensive for any higher reason.

The Osservatore correspondent quotes a protest of the Catholic General Mangin, one of the most famous leaders in the Great War. "The reckless indecency of a large part of our romantic literature," writes the general, "and the erotic character of our stage productions give a disastrous impression abroad and are of marked assistance to the propaganda of our enemies, who do not hesitate to affirm that these productions of the imagination give a faithful representation of the ways of French households."

The results in France itself are a more serious evil than any such opinion abroad can be. Unfortunately the French stage has its influence on the theatre in other countries, including England, and these protests in the French press may be useful if they do something not only to check the downward trend of the drama in France itself, but also suggest to English managers that when they offer the English public adaptations from risky French pieces, even after having to some extent "disinfected" them, they are presenting works that French critics—non-Catholics as well as Catholic—denounce as worthless and mischievous libels on French life.

### FREE MARRIAGE

VIENNA "MARRIAGE REFORM" RAID DUE TO N. C. W. C. INQUIRY

By Dr. Frederick Funder

Vienna, Feb. 18.—An investigation carried on here by the N. C. W. C. News Service representative has resulted in action by the municipal authorities to put an end to a "Free Marriage" agency, one of the social vagaries made possible by Socialist propaganda against matrimony. Some time ago a dispatch from Berlin, printed in the United States, spoke of the operations of a so-called "marriage reform" in Vienna which, it was said, aimed "to preserve the good of the old form but avoid its evils." A Dr. Haft, who was described as a former professor of mathematics was spoken of as the originator of the "reform." In substance the plan was to determine the compatibility of prospective married couples by analyses of their handwriting, and then, if their writing indicated that they would be mates to have them enter into a sort of temporary compact, without religious or civil ceremony, whereby each party retained full liberty to enter into relations with other persons of the opposite sex.

### SEARCH FOR THE FAKIR

When the Vienna correspondent of the N. C. W. C. News Service, in response to inquiries from America, began an investigation of this so-called reform movement here, he had some difficulty in finding anyone who had heard of it. The municipal authorities had no knowledge of it but were interested and began an investigation of their own. A search of the city directories revealed no trace of Dr. Haft and, for a time, it seemed that the investigation would be fruitless.

However, a more intensive search finally brought out some very astonishing facts—facts which resulted in court action to put an end to the "reform." Dr. Haft was located in lodgings off a narrow little lane in one of the suburbs of Vienna. The lodgings had been sub-let to him which added to the difficulty in finding him. A preliminary investigation disclosed that his activities bore a suspicious resemblance to those of the panders, so rigorously proscribed by Austrian penal laws.

### POLICE MAKE RAID

The police deemed the case worthy of more careful investigation and finally the headquarters of the marriage reform were raided. The raid disclosed a large collection of photographs of men and women candidates for the "Free Marriage." The police also found a register bearing the names of 480 women and nearly as many men, who had expressed their willingness to enter into one of Dr. Haft's marriage contracts.

A copy of the contract which the "Free Marriage" devotees entered into was also disclosed. Its main provisions read as follows:

"Both parties regard 'Free Marriage' as good comradeship through a life in common to be guided by the following two practical rules of conduct. (1) Never to call in a third person to arbitrate their differences of opinion, and (2) Never to allow the sun to go down on a hostile word or deed."

"Neither party is to be bound by any obligation of marital faithfulness."

"MARRIAGE" WITHOUT CEREMONY

It was explained that this contract was not to be solemnized by any religious or civil ceremony.

Before these contracts were signed, Dr. Haft had his prospects fill out questionnaires in which each person gave the most minute details concerning personal characteristics, habits and beliefs. Particular emphasis was placed on inquiries as to whether or not the applicant was an adherent of any spiritist or theosophist sect. Dr. Haft seems to have considered such persons as being especially desirable candidates.

After the questionnaires had been filled out, the solemn mummery of analyzing the handwriting took place. It was explained to the applicants that Dr. Haft was able by an examination of their writing to determine whether or not it would be desirable for them to be "married." Needless to say, there were fees collected at every stage of the proceedings, the cost for the analysis of the handwriting being particularly heavy.

The police have expressed the belief that at least sixty couples were victimized by Dr. Haft to the extent of actually entering into these so-called marriages. Proceedings before the courts have brought out the fact that Dr. Haft formerly lived in Ostrowo, Poland, and that he is a native of Buenos Aires. Before the police interfered, he had amassed a considerable sum.

### CIVIL LOYALTY OF CATHOLICS

LADY BRYCE'S SLUR MET BY HISTORICAL FACTS

Louisville, Feb. 29.—Benedict Elder, editor of The Record, Catholic paper of Louisville, in a letter published in the Louisville Courier Journal deals with statements reflecting on Catholic patriotism credited to Lady Bryce, widow of the former British Ambassador to the United States, in the published correspondence of Major Archibald Butt, Military Aide to President Roosevelt.

In one of the letters written by Major Butt which has been published by a number of newspapers throughout the United States, it is stated that in a conversation at the White House during the Roosevelt regime, the President was criticized by Mrs. Roosevelt and by Lady Bryce for a public letter urging religious tolerance which he had written a few days prior to the conversation.

Mr. Elder's letter reads: "To the Editor of the Courier-Journal."

"The statement regarding the civil loyalty of Catholics which is credited to the wife of former Ambassador Bryce in the letter of Archie Butt published Sunday, is an amazing thing from such a source. The Lady Bryce's opinion that Catholics would subordinate their own country, 'not only to the interests of Rome, but to Catholic countries as well,' can scarcely be ascribed to sentiment but would seem due to another cause, and while it is understandable that even Lord Bryce's wife might be uninformed as to Catholic principles, and not acquainted with history in general the ignorance of English history exhibited in the remark attributed to her is truly amazing."

"How many times has not England been at war with Catholic countries? Indeed, in all the wars that she has waged in different parts of the world during the last three centuries, was there ever one in which some Catholic country was not among her enemies? In her effort to establish dominion over the Mediterranean she crossed the interests of every Catholic country from Gibraltar to Suez. In her wars to establish her mastery of the high seas, she struck at every Catholic country in the world. In all the time, she never sent out an army or a ship, and never fought a battle on land or sea in which Catholics did not take part. But can anyone point to a single instance where a Catholic Englishman ever hesitated to strike for his country because the enemy was a Catholic country?"

"The greatest battle in England's history and the only instance where the nation stood with its back to the wall and fought its way out alone, was won with the help of Catholics against a Catholic country. Anyone