

Infirmary of the Order. The old fathers who are past work go there to die; those who are sick come to seek health from the strong tonic breezes of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

"I will certainly," I said, "and that very soon." Fra Pacifico rose to go. I came to the front door with him and held it open for him.

"Expect me very soon," I said. He smiled upon me, and bade me a polite adieu. Then only did it occur to me. "Why, santo cielo!" (holy heavens) I cried, "I am sending you empty away."

Fra Pacifico smiled again. I produced my pocketbook and offered him two francs. He was covered with confusion, and I afterward learned that I had given ten or fifteen times as much as any friar would expect.

About ten days later Fra Pacifico called again, and left, with many messages for me, a mighty gift of vegetables grown upon the convent grounds—cabbages, tomatoes, endive, fennel stalks, and the appetizing salad known as barba de Cappuccini. Such a great quantity, surely, I could not have bought in the market place for the dole I had given him in charity. My cook told me that he always did his long walk into town laden in this way with a sack of vegetables as a thank offering for those who had been kind to his convent. So difficult is it to do anything for nothing in Tuscany. Do but a kind act, and the recipient of it straightway sets about seeking how he may repay you.

A fortnight afterward Fra Pacifico came to breakfast. I was still in bed and asleep. His breakfast was a cup of black, sugarless coffee and a slice of dry bread. He would not sit down to it; he would take it off here but in the kitchen and at the bare deal table, and insisted afterward on washing his cup and platter. Perhaps this custom is enjoined by the rule of his Order. Perhaps it is part of a private system of his own for attaining the completeness of self-abnegation and humility, I do not know.

Fra Pacifico came again to "breakfast," and again I did not see him. Again he brought me vegetables—dainty cardoons, sweet kidney-beans and succulent artichokes. I gave orders that he should have the bounteous alms of a franc a month. He left me many messages of thanks, many messages of good will, and the prayer that I would not forget my promised visit to the convent.

Twelve months passed or more, and I suddenly became aware that I was no longer having cardoons for dinner. And then, why, of course, that monthly lire was no longer figuring in my accounts, and it must now be quite a long while since I received a new santino (holy picture). Could the humble friar be offended because I had never paid my visit? That was impossible in one who had so perfectly molded his soul to ancient Christian models. Nature in him must have done with her resentments. Could he be ill, then? I ordered around Benjamin, my cabman, at once, and drove off to the convent, twelve miles along the hot, white, dusty coast-road.

The convent was no convent, but the poorest kind of a house; the church beside it was bareer than any conventicle. I knocked at the door. It was opened by the cheeriest of lay brothers. His face beamed like the sun at morning, and his eyes twinkled upon me as if my presence had given him the only pleasure in life he most of all desired.

"Is Fra Pacifico?" I asked. "Then that beaming face all of a sudden grew woefully chopfallen; those twinkling eyes started with tears, and at my heart there came a sore pang. He need not have spoken.

"Alas! he is dead, dear signore. He died close upon two months ago. We are all distracted and suffer the sorest privations. He was such an excellent beggar was our dear brother, we wanted for nothing. But he never wrote down anything. We do not know who his friends were in the big city. I, who am his unworthy successor, do not know whom to go to, and have no success. We are like to die of hunger, and our only hope is in God Almighty and our holy Father St. Francis."

"I was one of his friends," I answered; "an altogether unworthy one. Come to me when you come into the city, and I will double my alms for the sake of his dear memory. Is he buried here?" I continued.

"Over yonder, signore," replied the lay-brother, indicating a tiny campo santo not a quarter of a mile distant. His mute, astonished look seemed to ask if it could be possible that I, a signore, really wished to see the grave of a lay-brother of St. Francis? But I did not tell him, and bidding him adieu, begged him to call upon me regularly when he came over to the "big city."

I found the grave for myself, a mound of earth with grass newly grown upon it, and at the head of it a wooden cross prominently bearing this inscription:

"Here lies, in Our Lord's embrace, Pacifico, a lay-brother in the Order of the Observations, known in the world as Raymond of the noble house of the Cianciani of Arezzo. He lived a holy life of sixty-two years and died a holy death, March 10, 1891."

At the head of the grave, too, there was something more, something which had no business to be there—a clump of nettles. I plucked them up. And then I sat down upon the mound and—well, the cold

world cares not to know and would not comprehend.

Dear Fra Pacifico, friend of an hour and memory of a lifetime, God have thee in His keeping through all eternity!—St. Anthony Messenger.

CATHOLIC PERIODICALS

AND THE TRUE FAITH

Not long ago the writer was present at a food administration luncheon during which he sat beside a man who is thoroughly familiar with the business of printing and publishing newspapers and periodicals. Naturally the principal topic was "administration," but of course, after a while we drifted on to other subjects, among which was the present status of periodical publishing. He asked, "How are the Catholic periodicals getting on?" and added in commentary: "Perhaps you are surprised at the question, but it is suggested by the fact that Protestant periodicals are suffering very severely and are dwindling so in number and in circulation, as to make a very different state of affairs in this regard from even ten years ago. Even before the War there was noticeable a marked falling off in the circulation of all sectarian periodicals, and which resulted in the quiet easy death of a number of them. Since the War there has been a growing increase of interest in matters merely secular and a most decided lack of interest in things purely religious. This condition, added to the high cost of paper, and other increases in expense, helps to explain the mortality of Protestant newspapers and periodicals of all kinds within recent years. The religious branch of the publishing business is only a fraction of what it was a generation ago."

CATHOLIC PERIODICALS

I assured my table companion that so far as I knew—and I thought that, I was reasonably familiar with the situation—our Catholic newspapers and periodicals were in a more flourishing condition than ever before. I told him that we had at least a half dozen publications, weekly and monthly, of national appeal whose circulation was satisfactory and growing at a steady rate of increase, and that they were more thoroughly representative of Catholic life and intellectual activity than they had been ten years ago. Besides these we have at least a half hundred weekly papers, and they all show a marked advance in quality, and most of them an increase rather than a decrease in circulation.

My friend, the publisher, was rather surprised because he had been inclined to think that our Catholic, diocesan and local newspapers, if not also the magazines, must surely share in that decadence which has been manifest for at least twenty years in the Protestant press and which seems to have come to a culmination since the War began.

I ventured to suggest that the growth of the Catholic press and decay of the Protestant press represented the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, and the dwindling interest in sectarianism and the growth of the Catholic spirit. I reminded him of Billy Sunday's question: "Which Church would one naturally select as the Church of Christ, the one to which one saw the poor flocking in such large numbers on Sundays that they had to be two or three or four or even more Masses, though every one who attended was expected to pay for a sitting, or the churches which had a single, or at most two services, and over whose doors a large sign emphasized that seats were free, and that all were welcome, a seatless had only small audiences?"

But while assuring my publisher friend I was wondering all the time whether there has been any really proportionate increase of interest and in circulation for our Catholic press. We Catholics in the United States have grown until we represent nearly 20,000,000 of people; but surely our Catholic press could be much better supported than it is at present if a fair proportion—let us say one-half—took a very definite interest in the Catholic press. I am not sure that the Catholics of this generation are nearly so ready to make sacrifices in order to have a Catholic publication come into the family and reading it, thus setting an example for the benefit of their children. That was true a generation ago. While our Catholic press has grown in influence and in circulation, I cannot think that it has grown in proportion either to the number of the population or the average growth in wealth of our people.

We too, I fear, are suffering from the dry rot of an over-interest in worldly matters to the detriment of a deeper interest in religious affairs. One thing is perfectly certain, that if this absorption in secular matters continues, our press will go the way that the Protestant press is going so rapidly. I am quite sure that it will be serious for Catholicity whenever this happens. I do not hesitate to say that a family which does not take in regularly at least one Catholic periodical is surely sinking into the depths of a declining faith. Sometimes the poor can scarcely afford it; but the family that cannot spare a cent a day in proportion to the privilege of reading a Catholic paper must indeed be mighty poor. It costs even less than this to be a regular subscriber

for a Catholic weekly paper; and a cent and a half a day would supply a Catholic family with a good local weekly Catholic periodical as well as a good national weekly or monthly.

But it is not the very poor who are the most backward in taking Catholic periodicals. Very often it is those who have considerable money to spend on luxuries, or waste on extravagance, who have so lost their interest in Catholicity, and in the every day events of Catholic life, that they think it beneath their newly acquired dignity and social condition to occupy themselves with Catholic affairs. Our Catholic press is not properly supported it will undoubtedly work considerable harm to the Church. It represents one of the best possible means of keeping faith and interest in Catholicity alive.

The gradual disappearance of the Protestant press is just another index of that passing Protestantism of which a distinguished Protestant professor at one of the great Protestant theological schools was so confident that he gave to his book the title "Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicity." Nothing will mean so much, however, for coming Catholicity as the proper support of the Catholic press. Any one who pretends to be a Catholic and is not supporting the Catholic press is making a serious mistake. Any one who pretends to have the interest of Catholics at heart and is not taking the simple practical means of keeping in touch with them is making a fool of himself, and trying to make a fool of others. Any one who will to accomplish something must will the means to it. The Catholic press represents the means, a heightened interest in Church matters.—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

FAITH AND A MOUNTAIN

Michael Williams, in America

This is the story of Brother Joseph, I shall call him; though that is not his name. Nor may I tell his name, nor the name of the mountain where he did show forth the faith that was in him, and which now through centuries to come, will appear the testimony to that faith. For the Fathers of the Order of which this Brother is a most humble member, asked me to keep quiet. Journalist that I am, I should have shouted the wonderful story from the house-tops of all the world. But in their prudence and their reserve and their modesty, virtues which journalism does not promote, they reminded me of the fact that Brother Joseph—which, remember, is not his name—is still living, and that one who is himself so truly humble, so self-resistant, should not be too hastily made a subject for publicity, even the publicity of the Faith. So I merely sketch the main outlines and show forth its wonder under veils.

I shall begin by giving you its moral. All good stories have morals, of course. And one moral of this true story is that it is not necessary to dig dusty books from the upper shelves of monastery or seminary libraries if you would know about great deeds of faith, and the high romance of the love of God; nor is it essential to go into pilgrimages to far lands for that purpose. Here, today, in the year of Our Lord, 1918, in this America of ours, Almighty God shows forth His power, and His marvels even as He did in the dawn of Christianity, or in those splendid centuries of vital, well-nigh universal faith when saints were in every city, and the paths were traced to places of pilgrimage that remain through all the ages.

It was at St. Anne de Beaupre, in Quebec—another great story which I must write, if no better appears, but that story must be a whole book—where I heard about Brother Joseph. A day or two before my arrival at St. Anne's a prominent citizen from a great city in the United States had come to the pilgrimage bank of the mighty St. Lawrence, where, since 1650, millions of pilgrims have visited the miraculous shrine of the Good St. Anne, mother of Our Lady. He had called upon one of the Redemptorist Fathers who have charge of the famous basilica, and told him how one year before, on that very day, being in the city of Quebec, and hearing for the first time about St. Anne's, he had visited it, drawn by the casual curiosity of a non-Catholic tourist. He was, he said, a man who found it hard to amuse or interest himself outside of his work, because for years he had been almost stone deaf.

Accordingly he entered the famed church, wherein the power of centuries of ardent prayer and potent faith may be felt most tangibly, and saw the people at prayers, and saw the mountain of crutches left by cripples miraculously cured, and read the tablets commemorating other cures. And he said to himself, so he told the priest, "This is very wonderful. Oh, that I could have faith like these poor people, and that this good St. Anne would be good to me." Then, because his time was limited, he turned to go. He thought, he remembered, that the church, though so beautiful and impressive, must be a singularly poor place in which to preach—non-Catholics usually think of churches in terms of preaching, poor souls deprived of sacramental worship—for even through the muffling veils of his deafness, he said he heard the roaring sound of the voices praying. So he went to Quebec. Picking his bag that night to go away, he also wound up his watch, and suddenly

he became aware that he could hear its ticking. And when he reached his home city, and his specialist, he knew and was assured, that his hearing was fully and to all appearances permanently restored. So this year he had come back to St. Anne's, for the express purpose of telling the priests what had happened, and to show that he was grateful. Will this event, in the end, give this man a full measure of that flash of faith which caused his prayer of power to the good St. Anne? We do not know. But, anyhow, we may pray that it will be so.

This event, naturally, set us all talking, at St. Anne's, about similar wonders there and elsewhere. Then it was that somebody told me about Brother Joseph, "a living saint." He lived in a great city through which I would be passing on my journey to New York. Why not make a pilgrimage there? I did so. Unfortunately, only having an hour or two to spare, I missed Brother Joseph, who was attending the funeral of a life-long friend that day. Ah, Catholic friendship goes on beyond the grave that is the end of so much for so many unhappy souls!—and I was obliged to go away before he returned. But from a Father of the Order, I heard the wonderful story, and saw its evidence crowning the hill of faith; and, now, with only a little space to spare, I will indicate barely the outlines of the tale. This humble Brother is attached to the service of a teaching Order which has many colleges in the United States and Canada and elsewhere. The college buildings stand at the foot of a mountain. This humble Brother began, some thirty or forty years ago, to climb this mountain-side, when his duties permitted him no opportunity for duty came even before prayer with Brother Joseph, or, rather, duty with him was prayer itself. By and by, the Fathers began to notice that Brother Joseph was being visited by an ever-increasing throng from the nearby city, begging him to pray for them. Numerous stories came to the ears of the Fathers about people cured, conversions, spiritual benefits attributed to Brother Joseph's helping prayers which were offered by him through that paragon of prayer, that pattern of perfect duty, that truest friend of the Divine, St. Joseph. Yet, as I was told, Brother Joseph differed in no wise from numerous other good Brothers in the Order; he was neither more pious, and certainly not more loyal, but for all that apparently, his faith appeared to be deeper than with most; it seemed to be of that type which Our Lord said could move mountains. At any rate, it was the occasion of an oratory being built on this particular mountain, where once or twice a year a Father would offer up the Holy Sacrifice, and where at other times Brother Joseph could offer up his prayers. And over the visiting crowds grew more constant and more dense; and now, on the crown of that mountain, there is arising a mighty basilica, built by the gifts of the Faithful, stirred by the faith of Brother Joseph.

I would that I could have met that dear Brother, and begged him to pray for me. It is written in one of the books of St. Teresa, that above all saints she trusted in the good St. Joseph. Therefore, I longed to complete my pilgrimage to this mountain of faith by meeting one who has not merely read that it is wise to pray through Joseph; but who had prayed, who had prayed with faith; and so, in the end, had crowned a mighty mountain with a towering basilica which shall be a sacramental of that faith. But it was too late; so I went upon my way, leaving Brother Joseph, undisturbed by the journalist, to sweep his floors, and to work in his garden, and to smile upon his thousands of friends, and in all simplicity to pray for them to God, through the good Joseph, who guarded Mary, who served Our Lord.

God never shuts one door but He opens another.

HANDICAPPING THE YOUNG

Many parents—and unfortunately many Catholic parents—are seriously handicapping the future of their children by permitting them to leave school when they graduate from the eighth grade. Even with our present child labour laws it is not unusual to see children at work when they should be busily occupied with their books.

Whether we like it or not, whether we are willing to admit it or not, the day of mere physical brawn is fast passing. The tremendous influx of immigrants who are fitted for nothing but manual labour makes it imperative that our growing-up generation of Americans should be kept at school as long as possible, and that whilst in school they should work as hard as possible. If America is ever fortunate enough to have universal military service—say from the age of eighteen to twenty-one—one of the blessings which will follow in its wake will be that our American boys will not try to find a "job" before they have laid the foundation for business success by a solid education.

Children are notoriously shortsighted. They live for the excitement and pleasure of the passing hour. Parents, therefore, have the duty of using their own experience and mature judgment in the direction of their children. The full weight of their authority should be brought to bear to keep them from leaving school at the age of fifteen or sixteen to become wage earners—in most cases bringing in so little that it is of no material help to the family. The longer we keep our children in school, the better we are fitting them for the battles of life. Even though they may not aspire to the higher professions, an education will certainly make them more intelligent workers in whatever field of labour they may choose. And it is to the intelligent worker that the rewards come. It is the trained mind that counts in the long run.—Rosary Magazine.

THE GOOD NOVELISTS' TASKS

The late Mr. Benson believed that nowadays the most effective way of teaching apologetics is through the medium of the artistically constructed novel. How successful he himself was in making that conviction practical is proved by the vogue his works of fiction have enjoyed. Protestants and agnostics who read his stories eagerly imbibed without realizing it the principles of Catholic belief and practice, while the children of the Church, who followed absorbingly the arguments for the truths of Catholicism which he so deftly wove into his plots, finished each successive Benson-book prouder than ever of their faith and better equipped than before to defend it. Such authors as John Ayscough, Canon Sheehan, Henri Bordeaux, Rene Bazin, Henry Harland, Mrs. Craigie and Miss Clark in their novels have achieved with consummate artistry the same objects as Mr. Benson. The tasks these authors set themselves are not easy ones to accomplish. For the thoughtful and responsible writer of today, as described by Professor Sherman, must know how to present a view of life both wise and brave, answering to experience as well as to desire, serviceable to art as in the daily walk. . . . How to give pleasure without corrupting the heart, and how to give wisdom without chilling it. How to bring into play the great passions of men without unchaining the beast. . . . How to recognise the role of the nerves in human actions without paralyzing the nerve of action. How to admit the weakness of man without dashing his heroism. How to see his acts and respect his intentions. How to renounce his superstitions and retain his faith. How to rebuke without despising him. How to reform society without rebelling against it. How to laugh at his follies without falling into contempt. How to believe that evil is fleeing forever before good, but will never be overtaken and slain. How to look

back upon a thousand defeats, and yet cling to the fighting hope."

If every high principled fictionist, while keeping the interest of his readers sustained, and maintaining a fine quality of literary workmanship, has to discover a satisfying solution of the foregoing problems, a Catholic novelist, who is gifted with the qualities requisite for a successful story-teller, ought to find the problems mentioned easier to meet and settled than does the Protestant or unbelieving writer. For the Catholic novelist has at his command the deep knowledge of the human heart possessed by the ancient Church; he hears her living voice explaining the meaning and the application of God's eternal laws, and he knows with the certainty of Divine faith that her teaching is true.

But the Catholic novelist, however gifted he may be, seems fated to receive but scanty practical appreciation from large numbers of his coreligionists. Some will praise him enthusiastically but seldom read his books. Other Catholics, largely of the "wish-bone" type, will greet the mention of his name with a scornful sniff and bury themselves in a best-seller that "everybody is reading." Larger numbers still, because they have never learned to feel interest in any "literature" but the newspapers and the cheap magazines, are not even aware that Catholic novels exist. An excellent Lenten "devotion" for these three classes of Catholics to adopt would be the cultivation of a first-hand acquaintance with the works of our standard Catholic novelists.—America.

May our gentle Jesus make our heart all His, absolutely His says St. Francis de Sales. Yes, let Him do it; I beseech Him. If He do not—oh, but

He will—at least He will permit us to go and take His. And were it necessary to open our breast to lodge His Heart, would we not die?

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