

### The Church and Social Reform

There are signs that the Catholic Church in the United States has come to realize that it is necessary for it to enter more actively into the field of social reconstruction. Both clergy and laity appear to have become conscious that the war has called Catholics to the service of the State in a way hitherto outside their social experience, and has laid upon them a share of the work of rehabilitating the world. That Catholics have very definite ideas and plans for reconstruction is everywhere admitted.

The Catholic of today in the United States sees that the mere affirmation of spiritual and ethical principles will not suffice as an entire reconstructive programme. They are the foundations only, not the whole edifice. The old order, against which both peasant and idealist are everywhere in revolt has had but little affinity with Catholicism, and was in effect a negation of the soundest Catholic principles. On all sides Catholics are asking themselves whether it will be better when the new order comes, and they are agreed that the answer depends largely on the uses made of opportunity by the Catholic body itself.

It is natural that most of the thought on this subject which finds utterance in public should be of the nature of what is called "advanced"—at least that is what it would have been called a little while ago. There appear to be two schools of thought. The most forward of them is that led by Fr. Joseph Reiner, of St. Xavier's College, Cincinnati.

This is offered distinctly and openly as an alternative to the programme of Socialism, which is antagonistic to the principles of the Church. This party sets as its main thesis the principle that the Social Problem is the problem of enabling all classes of human society to obtain a proper and just share of the goods of the earth, and that it accordingly embraces the problems of production and distribution.

To attain this end the exponents of the theory look for no social overthrow, such as is advocated by the Socialists. They see the solution of the problem in the elimination of waste and the development of the principal factors of production by means of religion and education.

Their programme includes attacks on all forms of vice, alcoholism, idleness, sickness, and domestic waste, and they claim that it can be done by proper restriction, by proper labor colonies, by compulsory arbitration in industrial disputes instead of the wasteful method of strikes, by the enforcement of pure food and health laws, and by the reduction of personal luxury and display. On the other side, they advocate increased efficiency in the operation of factories, shops, mines, and the distribution of products.

**Good Work for the Blind.**—The eighth annual report of the Xavier Braille Publication Society for the Blind, for the year ending December 31, 1918, has just been issued. This organization is engaged in the publication of Catholic books in raised letters for the Catholic blind children. The report of the society's work during the past year follows:

A fair measure of progress has been achieved in spite of the overwhelming demands of war times, and we wish to express our grateful appreciation to those friends who have so kindly remembered our quiet appeal amid the noise and tumult of the many drives for money which have swept over the land during the past year.

The following books have been brought out in American Braille: "Catholic Churchmen in Science," by James J. Walsh, M.D.; "A Short Cut to Happiness," by author of "The Catholic Church from Within"; "My Katherine E. Conway: 'More Joy,' by Road to the True Church," by Frank Johnson; "A Dream of Lilies," by Right Rev. Paul W. Von Keppeler; and "The Church the True Guardian of Liberty." Three books, have also been printed in Revised Braille, grade one and a half, as follows: "A Catechism of Christian Doctrine"; "Manual of Prayers and Devotions," by Joseph Stadelman, S.J.; and "San Celestino," by John Ayscough. A complete list of our publications has been compiled, all of which may be borrowed free of charge from the Xavier Free Circulating Library for the Blind, 136 West 97th street, New York City, N.Y., if they cannot be obtained from a library more convenient to the reader.

### Veracity being impugned

America publishes the following from the pen of Rev. Charles J. Malloy, S.J.:

Clever advertising has sold many a novel and enriched its author. Foreign novels and foreign authors are now popular in the United States and enterprising publishers must seek new names and new novels to meet the demand. The latest subject of clever advertising is Vicente Blasco Ibanez, the Zola of Spain. As the writer of this letter lived for some years in the same part of Spain as Blasco Ibanez, and is familiar with his novels, and the Spanish estimate of his work, it may be well to permit a word of warning to the readers of "America."

Many Catholics have read "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," and, in fact, we have noticed that several Catholic papers have advertised the novel. At its best, it must be classed as a godless book and somewhat tiresome, even despite the author's power of massing data and visualizing scenes. It does appeal to those eager to get a clever and clear analysis and insight of German war aims, as viewed by a Spaniard. But like all the novels of Blasco Ibanez, it soon wearies the reader, for there is no real plot, no pathos, no humor. We find only a series of disconnected incidents, with characters that indulge in speeches which are essays conveying the novelist's own views. But this is not our point. Many Catholics have read "The Four Horsemen," but few know that this work in English is only the first step of the attempt to introduce into the United States the other more tiresome and objectionable novels of this renegade, who writes with the one purpose of destroying every vestige of religious belief in God and the hereafter.

I call Vicente Blasco Ibanez the Zola of Spain, but I must add an apology to the immoral French writer. Zola has some humor and pathos; Blasco Ibanez has neither. The Spaniard depends to the methods of the yellowest journal of Spain, El Pais, and represents the clergy as grossly ignorant, avaricious and immoral. He portrays the Church as fearful of science: History, geology and astronomy cause its poor, ignorant bishops and priests to quake with fear for their future living. The people must be kept ever in ignorance. Take all these ideas and put them in the mouths of puppets, and, then, add to them a Spanish newspaper reporter's facility of description in a book of disconnected dramatic incidents and you have the novels of Vicente Blasco Ibanez at their best.

He will never be popular in the United States among the educated. He will fail to attract here as he failed in Spain, because he is a tiresome writer, too buglingly vulgar in his slanders of religion and its ministers. He lacks the charm, the touches of beauty which distinguish the novels of Fernan Caballero and Padre Luis Coloma. His style has none of the grace of that greatest of Spanish writers since the Golden Age of Spain, the late Marcelino Mendez y Pelayo. But Vicente Blasco Ibanez has the satanic cunning to lay his scenes in the most Catholic environment in order to discredit religion and misrepresent its ministers. He attacks the Catholic Church because it is the strongest, but he hates every Church that honors God.

**The wise old Chief**  
More than half a century ago, when the Civil War raged in the United States, Karkakonias was chief of the Chippewa Indians at Pembina. In order to impress him and his people with the grandeur of the United States and with the strength and power of the American armies, the government decided to give him a trip to Washington during the Civil War. Upon his return to his tribe, Karkakonias remained silent and impassive. His days were spent in smoking, his evenings in quiet contemplation. He spoke not of his adventures in the land of the great White Father. At length the tribe grew discontented. They had expected to hear the recital of the wonders seen by their chief, and lo! he had come back to them as silent as though his wanderings had ended on the Coteau of the Missouri, or by the borders of Lake Superior. Their discontent found vent in words.

"Our father, Karkakonias, has come back to us," they said. "Why does he not tell his children of the medicine of the white man? Is our father dumb, that he does not speak to us of these things?"

Then the old chief took his calumet from his lips and replied:

"If Karkakonias told his children of the medicines of the white man—of his war—canoes moving by fire and making thunder as they move, of his warriors more numerous than buffalo in the days of our fathers of all the wonderful things he has looked upon—his children would point to him and say: 'Behold! Karkakonias has become in his old age a maker of lies! No, my children, Karkakonias has seen many wonderful things, and his tongue is still able to speak; but, until your eyes have travelled as far as has his tongue, he will sit silent and smoke the calumet, thinking only of what he has looked upon.'"

"That blinkin' patent spirit stove of yours has gorn out, George."

"Well, can't yer light it again?"

"No! It's gorn out through the roof of the dugout."

A well-known music hall artist was chatting with a London journalist whose paper is not always to be relied upon for accuracy of statements. "My dear fellow," the comedian said, "I think that what you want is a bishop on your staff." "A etchop! Why?" asked the journalist in amazement. "Because," answered the other with a smile, "some of the statements in your paper are in sore need of confirmation."

**The Missionaries of the Northwest**  
A few miles north-west of Edmonton a settlement composed exclusively of French Half-breeds, situated on the shores of a rather extensive lake which bears the name of Grand Lac, or St. Albert. This settlement is presided over by a mission of French Roman-Catholic clergy of the order of Oblates, headed by a bishop (Grandin) of the same order and nationality. It is a curious contrast to find in this distant and strange land men of culture and high mental excellence devoting their lives to the task of civilizing the wild Indians of the forest and the prairie—going far in advance of the settler, whose advent they have but too much cause to dread. I care not what may be the form of belief which the onlooker may hold—whether it be in union or in antagonism with that faith preached by

these men; but he is only a poor semblance of a man who can behold such a sight through the narrow glass of sectarian feeling, and see, in it nothing but the self-interested labour of persons holding opinions foreign to his own.

He who has travelled through the vast colonial empire of Britain—that empire which covers one third of the entire habitable surface of the globe and probably on half of the lone lands of the world—must often have met with men dweller-like devotion. If you asked who was this stranger who dwelt thus among wild men in these lone places, you were told he was the French missionary; and if you sought him in his lonely hut, you found ever the same surroundings, the same simple evidences of a faith which seemed more than human.

I do not speak from hearsay or book-knowledge. I have myself witnessed the scenes I now try to recall. And it has ever been the same; East and West, far in advance of trader or merchant, of sailor or soldier, has gone this dark-haired, fragile man, whose earliest memories are thick with sunny scenes by the bank of Loire or vine-clad slope of Rhone or Garonne, and whose vision in this life, at least, is never destined to rest again upon these oft-remembered places. (Gen. Sir Wm. F. Butler in "The Great Lone Land.")

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| Royal Crown yeast cake 5c   | Corn flakes, 2 for 25c            | Oranges, " 50c            |
| Jam, pure, 4 lb. tin \$1.15 | Crumbles, 2 for 25c               | Bananas, " 50c            |
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