

Current Topics

Retirement of Father Hull

Father Hull, for 22 years editor of the *Bombay Examiner*, now retires in favor of Father H. Roper, S.J., and announces that official journalism will know him no more. That critical English periodical, the *Month*, says in appreciation of Father Hull's literary work to the pages of *America*, that it seems a singular disposition of Providence that one of our foremost Catholic writers in English, a man with a sane outlook on the world of thoughts, the ripe judgment of the world of facts which a thorough grasp of Catholic philosophy does so much to confer, should have to address his public mainly through the medium of a small weekly paper edited and published in Bombay, equally remote from both America and the British Isles. . . . Father Hull is essentially an "apologist" in the fullest sense of the word, concerned always with expounding and defending the truth which God has revealed through His Church, and asserting the validity of those means of reaching the truth with which human nature is endowed. The fortunes of the Church, both intellectual and material, the incidents arising from her contact with the forces of the world and the pride of human reason, the witnesses God has provided for Himself, both in conscience and in nature, the philosophical implications of the Church's teaching, these and similar topics have been his constant editorial preoccupation, until gradually his weekly output has evolved into a number of small volumes, the importance of which is out of all proportion to their size, and which have not as yet met the circulation their merits demand.

Spiritist Sunday Schools

Some time ago we called attention to the dangers to which people expose themselves in taking part in spiritist seances. In writing we had in mind those adults who for various reasons seek the acquaintance of the spirits without realising the perils which such acquaintance begets. According to the British press, however, the latest development in connection with the mystic cult is one that will demand stout opposition if much evil is to be averted. The spiritists have now established Sunday schools for children and young people with a view to training them in mediumship. Last year, we are told, there were over 1500 pupils in these schools, those in the lowest grades being children under ten years. As we previously pointed out spiritists themselves admit that mediums are brought in contact with evil influences during the seances. That is bad enough in the case of adults who may be presumed to have reached an age when they could make their own choice in a matter of this kind; but to expose helpless children to that kind of thing is positively diabolical. A school Manual thus advises the children:—

Let us open our hearts unto them: Let us purify ourselves of all that will bar their approach. Let us offer our physical bodies as instruments through which they can make their loving presence and message known.

The *Catholic Times* quotes from the hand-books of spiritists: "If we open the doors that communicate with the unseen we must expect all sorts and conditions of spirits to press forward to reach us. . . . He who meddles with this subject does so at his peril," for of the spirits who reach the medium "some are even sensual and vicious." Yet men holding these views would deliberately expose young children to the danger of moral and mental destruction which has been the fate of so many mediums. The most charitable thing that can be said about them is that spiritism has driven them insane. Still, the children will have to be protected from the lunacy of their elders.

A Presumptuous Jesuit

Things have come to a pretty pass in France when a Jesuit, a mere soldier priest bearing on his body the wounds of war, has the temerity to tell the Freemasons in office that he will not leave his country at their bidding. Yet this is precisely what Father Paul Doncoeur, S.J., has written to M. Herriot. This misguided man is the victim of the crazy notion that, because he risked his life in the trenches in defence of his country while the Freemasons and anticlericals were preserving theirs miles away from war's alarms, he should not be kicked out of his native land when the faint hearts of the lodges came to rule. The really shocking reflection is that his views have been adopted by all his colleagues who boldly express their determination not to go upon their travels again at a nod from the High Sign. They say they have as much right to remain in France as the deserters, traitors, and insurrectionists whom M. Herriot liberated from prison or permitted to return from exile. In a word, they have given voice to the almost sacrilegious belief that to have defended one's country in time of peril is as virtuous an act as riding a billy-goat in a Masonic lodge. Father Doncoeur reminded M. Herriot of his "hair-breadth 'scapes" the imminent deadly breach," remarking that he was thrice wounded and that he still had in his body a fragment of a shell received in the Somme. "And now," he said, "you show me the door." And then he went on: "Never during fifty months did you come to seek me out at Tracy-le-Cal, or at the Fort of Vaux, or at Tahure. I didn't see you anywhere talking about your laws or Religious Orders, and yet you dare to produce them to-day! Neither I nor any other man will take the road to Belgium again. You may take our houses, you may open your prisons—and there are many places in them left empty by those whom you know—so be it. But leave as we did in 1902? Never! To-day we have more blood in our veins, and then you see as soldiers at Verdun we were in the right place to learn how to hold our ground. We were not afraid of bullets or gas or the bravest soldiers of the Guard. We shall not be afraid of political slackers. We shall not leave because we do not want a Belgian or an Englishman or an American or a China-

man or a German to meet us far from home some day and ask us certain questions to which we would be forced to reply with down-cast heads, 'France has driven us out.' For the honor of France—do you understand the word as I do?—for the honor of France we shall never again say such a thing to a foreigner. Therefore, we shall stay, every one of us. We swear it on the graves of our dead." The author of that letter is an officer of the Legion of Honor and was decorated nine times on the field of battle. One of the citations drawn up by his commanding officers declared that "he exposed himself many times in order to save others." Even if he were not a Jesuit his record would make him a standing reproach to a Ministry many of whose members during the war were noted for little but "cold feet."

Modern Evils.

The annual conference of the Irish Catholic Truth Society was marked by the outspoken warnings against the materialism of the day uttered by several distinguished Irish ecclesiastics. The Bishop of Raphoe spoke of the lamentable ignorance in our days of Christian family life and the home. The walls of the home had suffered a widely-opened breach from the evils that the infant Church had to conquer in the days of Imperial Rome. They could not be blind to the fact of an ever-growing spirit of independence or self-sufficiency amongst the youth of both sexes; of an eagerness to shake themselves free of moral restraint and parental control. His Lordship dwelt upon birth control and said that it would be a catastrophe if the business of home-making, which for the great mass of women must for all time be their highest vocation, were considered as something to which they might not seriously address themselves. Any off-school of ultra-feminism, propagating any such view would be a menace to society. The Bishop of Clogher said that society at that moment stood in need of elevation, for it was diseased and sick unto death and needed regeneration, and it was through the family being truly Christian that regeneration would come. The danger was not imaginary. The lure from home for many years had been great, and there was danger that the Christian family might be drawn into the vortex of pleasure—mad, self-gratifying, materialistic mode of life of the age—all pleasing to flesh and blood, but deadening the sense of responsibility and undermining virtue.

A Zoological Litany

"Jeremiah Cruncher," a body-snatcher in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, used to suspect his dejected wife of having prayed against him when any of his "ventures" went wrong. He thought it a dreadful thing that an "honest tradesman" should be saddled with a wife who "flopped agen the bizness at a rate wot was positively ruinatin'," and he used to call the attention of his son, young Jerry, to "that unnatural mother o' yours, floppin' agen yer wittles." There is a band of Protestant missionaries in Spain who remind us of Jeremiah Cruncher in that they object to being "prayed agen," for they have

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