

Current Topics

A Sinister Move

Catholic papers from abroad see a sinister influence at work in the French Government on behalf of Caillaux. One paper tells us that the Masonic Government of Herriot is absolutely shameless, as bad as in the worst days of Combes. That arch-scoundrel Caillaux, who did his best to sell France to Germany and who got off lightly with a few years exile, has been amnestied and publicly whitewashed by Herriot himself. According to the French Premier, Caillaux has never been guilty of treachery towards his country. Such a pronouncement from a man in such a position is positively dangerous, for Herriot will think nothing of doing as Caillaux did and with a clear conscience! Malvy, perhaps, was not such a rascal, but he deserved all he got. The Masonic Lodges have something up their sleeve. Caillaux served them well, and he is needed for future services. Herriot is probably not clever enough and so Caillaux will take his succession. It is time a Cromwell of sorts, or a Mussolini appeared in *la douce France* to pack out all the *canaille* of the Grand Orient, aprons, trowels and all.

A "Popular" Bible

Our Calcutta contemporary, the *Catholic Herald of India*, shows scant respect for the dignity of those scholarly people who believe they were sent into the world for the specific purpose of tinkering with the Bible. From time to time in the history of the world, it says, men have thought that the Bible was not sufficiently open to the man-in-the-street. Saur John Wyeliff began, the so-called Reformers took it up, Royal Commissions, etc., have continued the tradition, and now we have come to the era of Harcourt, Haymans, and Moffat who, not content with "ye Bybel in ye English tongue," want a Bible in up-to-date lingo, doncherknow." The older men made exegetical and theological slips, while the moderns not only keep the mistakes but add bad taste and worse style. No doubt the Bible should be readable and even as understandable as possible, but the whole tendency reposes on a double fallacy. First, that an antiquated or elevated style repels the reader. On that principle we'd have to have half a dozen collateral versions, one for the don in sequepedalian vocables, another for the business man in terms of bulls and bears, one for the sportsman in horsey language, another for schoolboys with plenty of "rippings" and "rotters," sprinkled throughout its pages; yet another for flappers in heliotrope and organdie, and finally, one for the man in the gutter, a real Saxon edition. It is of universal experience that the books we revere are all written in a language above our daily talk. Shakspeare and Tennyson we treasure and revere, while Kipling and Jerome K. Jerome merely amuse us. The Bible is not meant to amuse. The second fallacy is that the open Bible is the open door to Heaven. You might as well say the British Pharmacopoeia is an open door to health. Just try it on a sick man and jot down the result. The Bible is full

of "hard things" and needs not only an expert explanation but the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. That is where the Catholic Church comes in.

How the Blacks Enlisted

When during the war the cables told us of the burning enthusiasm with which the blacks in Africa rushed to the colors for the purpose of wiping German Junkerdom off the slate we were not a little sceptical about that self-same enthusiasm. We felt that it was much too fervid to have been born outside Paris or London. However, according to the Home papers, a case has just been tried in the French Courts which throws a side-light upon the manner in which the blacks were persuaded to fight for democracy and the rights of small nations. M. Diagne, who sits in the French Chamber as one of the deputies for Senegal, sued a periodical, *Les Continents*, for libelling him in an article which said that he had received illegal money rewards for recruiting black troops for the French Army during the war. He won his case, but incidentally it was shown that prior to his taking up the work of recruiting in 1917 it was conducted by atrocious methods of violence. "It was not recruiting, but a slave hunt," said one witness. Villages were surrounded by armed forces, and the able-bodied men were marched off as prisoners to be sent to fight on the Yser and the Somme. It was deposed that early in 1917 the Governor of French West Africa asked for white troops for the work and for 45,000 bombs and hand grenades and four bombing aeroplanes to help in the recruiting and to deal with possible revolts. A British Catholic paper says numbers of the black troops thus enslaved were mere savages, and that long before this trial there was evidence that many of them brought the methods of African savagery to the French battlefields. We believe the term "savage" to have a much wider application.

"Below the Standard"

Under the above caption the *Catholic Times* discusses the standard of living endured by the bulk of the laboring classes in England; and if figures can be said to speak, those marshalled by our contemporary certainly declare that to be a "free-born Englishman" has its drawbacks. It is estimated that £3 10s per week is the lowest upon which an average English family can live reasonably with thrift and without luxury. Professor A. M. Carr Saunders is quoted as saying that the household budget totalled up to 62s 4d per week for a family of five. In this estimate he allowed 26s 3d for the week's food, an average of 3s 9d per day, or 9d per person per day. Taking his low figure of 8s 10d for rent, the two items account for 35s 1d. For clothing he allowed 11s 3d per week, representing £7 3s per annum for the man's working and other clothes. Turning to the other side of the picture, our contemporary goes to the *Morning Post*, a journal not entirely saturated with Bolshev-

ism, for statistics of the excess profits paid by the public for certain foods:—

On Bread	...	...	£52,000,000
On Meat	...	...	78,000,000
On Milk	...	...	45,000,000
Total	...	...	£175,000,000

In the course of its articles the *Post* quotes Sir Charles Fielding, late Director of Food Production, on the subject of milk. Sir Charles estimates that with milk at 8d per quart the consumer pays:—

	Per annum
To the Farmers (at 3½d per quart)	£53,000,000
To the Railway Companies (at ½d per quart)	3,500,000
To the Town Dairy Distributors (at 4d per quart)	56,500,000

It should be remembered that £175,000,000, to quote the *Morning Post*, "is over and above what is paid to the farmers and railways, the miller, the baker, and the butcher and allies, after allowing not only for their cost, but also for 10 per cent. profit throughout." The *Catholic Times*, commenting on the conditions, says that with unemployed numbering over a million, one wonders how many homes are facing the winter with despair in their hearts and a reduced vitality. It is a reproach to our common Christianity that so many thousands of our fellow-creatures are underfed and a still greater number scandalously housed. Both politicians and property owners consider themselves entitled to ignore Christian guidance in exercising political and economic power. Modern Governments consider themselves entitled to expect or to coerce the clergy to agree with them. What Christian Church outside the Catholic protests against the secularisation of political, social, and economic life?

Advertising New Zealand

The other day the local papers informed us that the new Publicity board set up by the New Zealand Government is to launch out in a programme of intensive advertising. The United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, India, and the United States are to be decorated with picture posters displaying the beauties and advantages of New Zealand. That is just as it should be; but we hope that this new board will not permit its zeal to outride truth to the end that humble folk will be persuaded to leave their own country in the belief that all New Zealand workmen live in ten-roomed houses, each one of which is on its own ten-acre plot, which in turn is divided into compartments for the orchard, the poultry run, the stock paddock, the stables, and the garage. We have a vivid recollection of an address on New Zealand delivered in 1922 in London before the Royal Society of Arts by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Bille Robinson, Colonel the Hon. Sir James Allen, K.C.B., High Commissioner for New Zealand, presided, and he sat looking his audience fair in the eye whilst the lecturer told how this fair land was calling from the Antipodes for immigrants and de-

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