

FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN AND THE WAR

A STIRRING ADDRESS.

Last Sunday morning (says the *Liverpool Catholic Times* of September 18) Father Vaughan said Mass and addressed the Cameron Highlanders at Invergordon, taking for his text, 'If whole armies stand up against me, I will not fear; for Thou art with me.' The preacher said that the war clouds that had been gathering for forty years and more had now burst over them, and from the uttermost parts of the earth there rose up the cry 'to arms.' A world-wide conflagration had arisen out of the tiny Servian spark, which, the 'mailed fist,' had he chosen, could have as easily quenched as fanned into flame. But the War Lord of the earth was bent on conquest, and was only waiting his opportunity to unsheath his sword.

Germany Wanted Peace Till it was Ready for War.

Even before the blast of battle had sounded in their ears Germany was mobilising its troops. When the favorable hour struck, when the opportunity arrived, the enemy rose up in his full strength and declared, through his Chancellor, that the German troops would 'hack their way to victory.' The White Book, from which Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey had drawn the texts of their epoch-making speeches, had proved up to the hilt that Germany was out to reset the map of Europe, and to reconstruct the nations of the earth. The war party was determined to justify to its people its vast armaments. It had sat on the safety valve long enough, and now it promised its teeming population nothing less than the French Colonies for its expansive interests and enterprise. The lust of power and the greed of gain had atrophied German's moral sense, so that in its intoxication it altogether forgot those principles upon which alone civilised nations can live and flourish. The enemy not only trampled on treaties to which he had lent his name, but invaded neutral territory, where he had no right to foothold, and then stooped in his blind insolence asking Great Britain to be a party to a bargain which meant our stabbing a friend in the back. Germany's whole policy was a conspiracy against honor, truth, and freedom, but the Chancellor, with infinite irony, promised to make what was all wrong all right. Not even the Kaiser himself knew the secret of doing that. Father Vaughan said it was difficult even with facts before them to believe that a people so cultured, so learned, so scientific, and so brave and honorable, could stoop to methods so

Base, Mean, and Contemptible,

in order to facilitate their robbery of possessions to which they could show no claim. Never before had a civilised nation adopted for its motto in life 'the end justifies the means.' But the war party, made up of blood and iron, had to win by means foul or fair. Already, before they were in the thick of the fight, the war-paths were red with blood, wet with tears, and strewn with dead. Germany had reckoned upon being in Paris before now. It would take her all her time and strength to prevent the Allies from embracing each other in Berlin Unter den Linden. No doubt she had millions of brave men yet to draw from. Her forces were led by skilled leaders, and in their ranks every man was set and fixed like a cog or wheel in the great engine of war. But their war-cry was set in a minor key: it lacked the vitality of fine motive, and except on the plea that might was right, their fight could not be justified. This blind Samson was grappling with his own destruction and ruin.

The preacher said if he found it difficult to justify Germany's going to war it would be impossible to justify England's keeping out of it. They, a peace-loving Empire, had heard the war-cry, and taken up arms because they were not dead to the sense of honor, truth, and freedom. They were slow to declare war; they needed no fresh fields of conquest; they had no ambitions but for peace and prosperity. They were

A Patient People, and Not Easily Provoked to aggressive action, but there was one thing they

cherished dearer than life, and that was British honor, British truth, and British freedom. They had been stung to the quick by the insult offered them in Germany's bribes, and the British lion had been roused to fury by the broken pledges with which Berlin was strown. Never had Britain in the whole story of her life engaged in a nobler crusade; never had her sons rallied with greater alertness to the colors; never were they so proud as they were to-day of being subjects of an Empire that would not stoop to base tricks, and break her word of honor.

Wellington had said there was nothing more appalling in war than victory, except defeat. In spite of the horrors of war it nevertheless evoked fire out of the flint, and in the fire of battle the dross was shaken off the gold, and what was bravest and noblest in man shone out with conspicuous splendor. Had Britain never engaged in war she never to-day could have proved to the world the stuff she was made of. The traditions of Trafalgar and of Waterloo had lain dormant, but were now proving their worth on the fighting line in France.

Their representative poet had reminded them —

'Thrice is he armed
Who hath his quarrel just.'

Their Empire was not handicapped for want of a motive in the deadly fight. 'Never,' said Mr. Asquith, 'had England gone to battle with a clearer conscience.' She felt in the words of the text—'If whole armies stand up against me, I will not fear; for Thou art with me.' She was fighting for all that makes for honor and freedom, and English and Scotch, and Irish soldiers, with our contingents from our oversea dominions, were inspired and actuated by principles which made irresistibly for victory. They had not yet passed beyond the early stages of the war. They knew that where millions were fighting on a battle front hundreds of miles long, the tide of war must necessarily ebb and flow, but it was

Moral Force Against Brute Force

on which the issues of war so much depended. Germany had declared she was making a war of aggression, and was fighting for conquests. Britain, on the contrary, wanted nothing but the balance of power, the freedom of nations, the peace of the world. She was armed and up to smash that brutal power, whose religion was might, and whose ideal was, 'Germany, the War Lord of the World and the arbiter of nations.' Of the ultimate issues of the world-wide fight in which the nations were engaged they could have no possible doubt. So long as the Allied forces held together they would not only keep the enemy at bay, but force him back till, like a nut in the nut-cracker, he would be crushed between the invading armies on the east and west. He believed in the skill of their generals, the might of their guns, and the bravery of their men. He had no doubt that moral force allied to brute force must be victorious over brute force alone. The war might be long, the losses would be counted by hundreds of thousands, but in the end the shout of victory would be on their side, and

The Sacrament of Fire

through which they passed would be for the cleansing of Europe, which would emerge chastened and purified by its purging flames. Father Vaughan concluded his harangue to the men by eulogising the Scottish troops, and imploring those who did not bear arms to lift up the arms of prayer, pleading with the God of Battles to draw good out of this scourge of war, and to give His helping hand to the Allied troops, who were not fighting for plunder, but for honor; who were engaged in a crusade which might bring about universal peace among the nations, so that instead of peoples armed to the teeth, ready to spring at one another's throats, there might in the future be seen rising up upon the earth a Brotherhood of peoples, under the Fatherhood of God, all living on terms with one another under the smile of heaven in a 'multitude of peace.' Such had been Pope Pius X's last ejaculatory prayer—It was his hope that the lesson from the world-war would teach mankind there was no peace but in Christ, the Prince of Peace.

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