

one of the great questions of the present day in economics, in science, in history, in politics.

I am perpetually coming across sentences in which it is taken for granted that the Catholic lies as far as possible "to the right" in an extreme position of refusing inquiry, experiment, reasearch, redress of error or injustice, speculation in philosophy, restoration or creation of a better commonwealth, criticism of documents in history and of institutions in politics; an extreme position of immobility, routine, and blindness—whence there is supposed to start a gradual progress of thought less and less "conservative" until one reaches what may be called the "extreme left" of materialism, or atheism, or communism, or the rest of them.

Taboos Outside the Church.

In the present controversy on the origin of the Human Body, for instance, it is taken for granted that the Catholic mind exceeds the most benighted Bibliolater in his literal interpretation of Genesis. In economic debate it is taken for granted that the Catholic mind will naturally be in support of plutocracy. In political debate it is taken for granted that the Catholic mind will never admit popular rule, or even the action of public opinion upon government. Nothing is more common to the average educated Englishman than the conception that discussion, debate, the analysis of causes and the search for first principles is cut off from the Catholic through his acceptance of Authority. In point of fact, as any one of us can testify the one and only society of men in the world where there is real debate, no shirking of facts, and most vigorous and free action of the intelligence, is the Catholic. An enemy might bring against our age-long history that it was burdened with a vast mass of useless discussion and of futile debate, and that we were forever splitting straws and philosophising about every mortal thing, but it is sheer ignorance of one's subject to think of the Catholic community as a portion of humanity railed off, within whose boundaries inquiry, debate, and definition, and all that goes with the use of the human mind, are shut out.

It is in society outside the Catholic Church that you find taboos forbidding criticism of "experts," "modern opinion"—or even the newly rich.

Now, as I have said, this gross provincialism on the part of those who surround us, this exceptional ignorance upon the chief power in the modern world is becoming a source of national weakness.

Is any remedy discoverable for so dangerous a disease? I know of none except the perpetual discussion and instruction by the living voice, and, in print, books between covers, and the tract and the pamphlet. For the general agency of the press is not open to what would seem a mere extravagance. Nor, it must be added, are the great bulk of those who own our popular press to-day of sufficient education to understand the unique character of the Catholic Church, its challenge to existing society, and the importance of knowing what it is. Nor would they print the Catholic Truth save as an occasional "stunt," and the "stunt" press

is an evil which men who boast the high Catholic culture should avoid like a bad smell. It is no breach of confidence to tell my readers that I was asked by the owners of the *Daily Express* to join their last "religious" sensation; that I refused, and that I am glad I refused. A little may be done by occasional query and occasional ridicule, but very little because those who are thus brought to book—and the great bulk of their readers—will not believe that the thing of which they know so little is what it is or has the importance it has.

For my own part, I fancy the awakening will come through some great political change in the larger world of Continental Europe, which will gradually impress opinion with the results of the growing Catholic strength.

Just as those old-fashioned Protestants, who disliked and feared the advance of physical science in our time have been compelled, however ignorant, to accept its results, so this provincial ignorance of what the Catholic Church is, of its increasing power, and of its political significance, may at least be impressed through the discovery that its culture is making certain great and unmistakable advance upon the Continent of Europe, that its birth-rate is not in peril—that it outbreeds—that it thinks more strongly and more clearly, and that its opponents in thought and in international action—such as Prussia—have weakened, while its exemplars—such as Poland and Italy—have grown stronger.

The Logic of Facts.

To sum up; as it seems to me, nothing can be done through the press, save long-repeated challenge, letter, protest, and query; not by direct and sufficient statement; for such would either not be admitted, or admitted only in vulgar and degraded surroundings in some "yellow" paper as an occasional sensation.

Much may be done through that very slow process of pamphlet, speech, and book by which in the course of a whole generation the theory of Socialism (for example) was gradually extended to millions, where at first it appeared as the eccentricity of a very few.

But most will be done, not by us here in England, but by the logic of facts in Europe.

Father Damien's "Rule of Life" Among Exhibits at Vatican

Among the many precious and interesting relics gathered in the great Vatican Missionary Exhibit is a note-book containing the written Rule of Life drawn up for himself by the heroic Leper-Priest, Father Damien.

This valuable document recalls most vividly a life that was lived solely for God and for the souls of those who were regarded by their fellowmen as outcasts, cut apart by a loathsome, contagious disease from the rest of their kind.

Stevenson, who so closely identified himself with Father Damien, wrote of the Leper Colony at Molokai: "It is a pitiful place to visit, and a hell to dwell in."

A thing accursed it might well be called, this beautiful isle set like a gem in the midst of azure waters.

Coming of Damien.

What did Eternity hold in store for the lepers? It remained for Damien to answer. Up to the coming of this heroic priest, death was the end, apparently, for the leper. During life, "cut off from all healthy society, deprived of home and family, without occupation, without interests, without any law and without religion, it was but natural that he should indulge in every excess. Thus, as the lepers sat in their crowded hovels, playing cards, they drank greedily of the juice of the ki-tree, after which they became as beasts, having cast off the dignity of men. For the juice of the ki-tree is sweet to those who have no hope, and who look not for the final resurrection."

When a leper died, a hole was dug in the ground, into which the dead man was flung. That was the end. He had lived as he died. But life or death—what did they matter?

Father Damien appeared to be outwardly no more than a Flemish peasant. Rough and brusque, his biographers say that he was a man poorly clad. "His hands were hardened with toil, and he was ignorant as the world counts wisdom. But he was content with the truth which embraces knowledge."

For ten years Damien worked single-handed in Molokai. His accomplishments during this period were marvellous. Not only the spiritual side of his poor lepers was tenderly looked to. He remedied so far as lay in his power their housing conditions and other circumstances which sorely needed reform.

"I am glad there is now no doubt about my sickness. I am a leper," he wrote shortly after the verdict had been passed upon him by the physicians. But he remained calm and resigned in the midst of his chosen people. *Fiat voluntas Tua* was his only cry.

The service of Father Damien lasted in all, for the space of sixteen years. Then came the welcome summons Home. At the news of his death, a sudden hush fell on the lazaretto. A great heart was still, "and this man, who had done great deeds among his fellows, was at last called to his reward, while his plague-stricken body was let down into a leper's grave."

The Rule of Life of Father Damien and which may be viewed under its case by those who are privileged to visit the Missionary Exhibit at the Vatican reveals, as nothing else could the beauty of a soul wholly dedicated to the service of its God.

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