

The Catholic Journal

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Friday, Oct. 8, 1930

Ray S. Baker

We note by the daily papers that Ray Stannard Baker, who writes for so-called popular magazines, and is just now connected with the American Magazine has been visiting Rochester and is to write us up with particular reference to our politics and civic organizations.

While Mr. Baker may be one of the greatest writers in the whole world, it may be well to watch carefully what he writes about us and if he repeats his past performances his writings may be taken with just a grain of salt.

Probably, Mr. Baker will have much to say about Rochester's public supported social centers, Sunday concerts and playgrounds. But we venture the assertion that he will not write or assert that the Catholics of Rochester blazed the way for social centers in their parochial club houses and societies in which the Catholic young were held together. Nor will he draw any comparison showing that the Catholic built, equipped and maintained their social centers themselves and that the public treasury was not mulcted in one cent either for their erection, equipment or maintenance.

Probably, Mr. Baker was not informed of these facts. We Catholics have been too modest ourselves and have not protested against the diversion of public funds to the maintenance of more than six, with hearts as municipal proselytizing agencies, brave and as generous as and Socialist propagandas, for devoted as any in the world, and that is what the social center movement in Rochester really amounts to. In proof of this we call attention to the fact that the head center of the social center movement is one of the lead- ing Socialists in the United States and that the Rochester authorities are well aware of this. When public funds are poured out to spread Socialism tenets there need be no wonder if Socialism waxes strong in Rochester.

We base our hint that Mr. Baker is a bigot and hostile Catholicity upon written proof furnished by himself. In the October number of the American Magazine Baker writes as follows:

"There is something infinitely pathetic in the effort of the old Jews to maintain their religion in New York, and in less exaggerated form one may see the older Presbyterians, Methodists and Roman Catholics struggling desperately in the torrent of modern progress to preserve all the old conditions and customs of their churches."

Commenting upon this, a correspondent of the Union Times comments as follows:

Mr. Baker nowhere gives name or date or authority for his presumption that the Catholic church is in the same boat with the other religions. Altogether he has mentioned in the course of his investigation having visited only two Catholic churches, and he testified that both of them were crowded. But he seems to find special delight in throwing his name Roman Catholic into his

accounts of the desperate straits of Jews and Protestants and insinuating in a general way that the Catholic Church is sharing all their ills of decay. For instance: "A few Jewish congregations in New York have bought out and re-arranged (as synagogues) abandoned Protestant or Roman Catholic churches." We haven't the data at hand to denounce this with the short and ugly word, but we want to see sworn proofs before believing it of even one Catholic church in New York City.

Again he says: "A world-wide liberalism is shaking ancient institutions, old walls are everywhere tottering. The Roman Catholic has his Modernist, the Protestant his Higher Critic, and the Jew his Reform Movement." Mr. Baker likes this statement so well that he publishes it twice, in both the October and September numbers of the same magazine. It is the grossest misrepresentation. The October Missionary, published by the Apostolic Mission House, says of it "To class Modernism among Catholics with Higher Criticism among Protestants and the Reform Movement among the Jews, is about as fair and accurate as to class the plague of San Francisco in 1908 where a few rats were infected with the Black Death of London in 1348 where nine out of every ten men died."

Let the Catholics resent this sort of talk as the New York Catholics did certain attacks by Arthur Brisbane with the result that William Randolph Hearst is making frantic efforts to undo the injury done to his business by indignant Catholics by unusually gracious treatment of things Catholic.

Retreat.

Certainly, the movement to have "retreats" for the laity is spreading fast. Much civic good to the entire country may come of it, too. At the fifth retreat for men held recently in Fordham University, New York, its director Rev. Fr. Shealy, S. C., said: "Some years ago six men gathered in a little room in Belgium to begin a retreat movement which has virtually saved Belgium from socialism and irreligion, but they at Fordham were more than six, with hearts as brave and as generous as and as devoted as any in the world, and that is what the social center movement in Rochester really amounts to. In proof of this we call attention to the fact that the head center of the social center movement is one of the leading Socialists in the United States and that the Rochester authorities are well aware of this. When public funds are poured out to spread Socialism tenets there need be no wonder if Socialism waxes strong in Rochester. It is indeed a rest from the stress and strain of business cares and duties, it is the most active time in a man's life, the activity of heart and spirit, which gives meaning and character to all other forms of activity.

In referring to the growing interest in the movement, Father Shealy said that it was almost as keen and as deep among Protestants as Catholics. As crowning event of the session of the Catholic Summer School just closed comes the announcement of the Champlain Tercentenary Commission to the effect that beside the white birch cross which surmounts the bluffs overlooking the Summer School grounds and the historic lake the heroic figure of Samuel Champlain, a monument to cost \$50,000 is to be erected. For this much credit is due to Mr. John B. Richey chairman of the executive committee of the school, Plattsburg, N. Y., who together with Senator James J. Frawley and Assemblyman James J. Foley and many other prominent Catholics, has done much to make it possible.

IN THE KEY OF A FLAT

By Annie Emmons.

The Waldrons had a neighbor in the flat building in which they lived, who made their acquaintance as soon as they moved in. She took occasion to warn them thoroughly not only about the janitor but about all the other tenants in the building whom she chose to regard as undesirable persons to know.

It was her habit to appear in the morning, just as the Waldron baby was beginning his nap. She invariably came leading her noisy 6-year-old daughter by the hand. "Oh, Mrs. Waldron your breakfast work not done yet was her greeting one morning. But then my husband says it isn't for me to judge other people. I'm so quick. You won't mind if I close these front windows, will you? I know you'd rather I'd make myself at home perhaps you have one open in the bedroom too? I'll just step in here and close that. Oh never mind how it looks. I've seen disreputable bedrooms before."

You see I have to be so careful of Geraldine while she has this cough. No I don't think it's whooping cough at all, you young mothers are so anxious about your babies, aren't you? The doctor said it was whooping cough of course but I say it's all nonsense. She's never whooped once. Still naturally I don't keep her out of drafts and use all necessary precautions. That's the reason I came up. I always go to sit out my fat thoroughly in the morning and there's a perfect lot of fresh air coming through now. I was afraid that Geraldine might take cold. Do you know I've air moving yet. Is there a window open in your dining room? No, out still, is it?

Yes Geraldine darling you may as on Mrs. Waldron's piano. She said to mind. What does make your cry so dreadfully Mrs. Waldron? Sleepy? Well then why doesn't she take his bottle and go to bed like a normal child? I wish you could have seen Geraldine when he was a baby. That child never cried. She used actually to amuse herself to sleep.

Oh, Mrs. Waldron exploded at that making a ferocious gesture at the door which had just closed behind Mrs. Annie and Geraldine. There's only one comfort about her coming in the morning. It saves her the day.

But that day to punish her for talking too soon Mrs. Annie ran again directly after luncheon. Still in the kitchen she called out finding the latch off and stopping in without a knock. What a drudge you make of yourself! I wouldn't do it for any man.

No drudgery about this Mrs. Waldron answered. I was just going together a little salad so that it would have lots of time to get chilled before dinner, but I've finished now. Well, I won't detain you. I just wanted to ask if you had any idea of the straits that poor little bride in the second floor is in. Selling her wedding presents to pay the rent.

But, Mrs. Annie are you sure they seem so happy and she dresses beautifully?

I wish I dared go straight down and find out if it's true, said Mrs. Waldron to herself after she had lunched a fresh afternoon gown. Then as if in answer to her wish she heard a gentle knock at the door and there stood the poor little bride, herself.

I brought back your magazine," she began giving a very good imitation of radiant happiness. "No, thank you, I won't come in. I know you're busy preparing dinner." "Dinner? At 3 o'clock in the afternoon? Indeed I'm not, and of course you'll come in," cried Mrs. Waldron. As she is a determined woman the little bride did come in and chatted for two hours about everything but trouble.

Mrs. Waldron was charmed, but at the same time haunted by those wedding presents. As her caller rose to go she obeyed an impulse and caught her hand.

"My dear," she said, "don't think me curious, but if you are in trouble, I wish I could know and help Mrs. Annie."

"Trouble?" echoed the puzzled little bride.

Then the two women sat down again and talked the subject to its roots. "It was all made out of this," said the little bride at last. "I had several duplicate sets of salad forks given me by people whom I didn't know well—business acquaintances of my husband's—and I thought of giving one of them to a girl friend who's going to be married. I had them spread out for her to choose from and, just then, in walked Mrs. Annie. She stared her eyes out, but didn't explain. Isn't it absurd?"

"Here you were, pitying me, and here I was, feeling so sorry for you because your dear of a husband insisted on having such elaborate dinners that you had to begin preparing them at half-past 2 o'clock. Mrs. Annie was in just after lunch and she said so."

"Oh," gasped Mrs. Waldron. "The idea of Henry Waldron's insisting on an elaborate dinner! He'd rather have bread and milk than anything else. If I could make laws I'd have one keeping gossips out of flat buildings. That woman ought to live on a broad plain."

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